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# SHOULD THE CLANS DECIDE?

## THE PROBLEMS OF MODELLING SELF-GOVERNMENT AMONG THE CARRIER-SEKANI INDIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

BY

WENDY KATHERINE GRACE AASEN

©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Fall 1992

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W.K. Aasen

#1 3463 Oak Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6H 2L7

Date Submitted to FGSR: October 5, 1992

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled SHOULD THE CLANS DECIDE? THE PROBLEMS OF MODELLING SELF-GOVERNMENT AMONG THE CARRIER-SEKANI INDIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA submitted by WENDY KATHERINE GRACE AASEN in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Michael

Michael Asch (Supervisor)

David Bai

David Bai (Committee Member)

Gurston Dacks

Gurston Dacks (Committee Member)

Date Signed: October 5, 1992

## Abstract

The Federal Government is interested in pursuing self-government negotiations with Indian bands and tribal councils across Canada. The government expects Native groups to define what self-government means to them, to explain how their governments will be designed, and to detail how they will interact with other governing structures and bodies. The Federal government has recently been encouraging the use of traditional practices, customs, and structures in Native self-government plans. This policy has created a number of problems for Native government leaders.

This thesis, based on published and unpublished sources and fieldwork, presents the problems encountered by the Carrier-Sekani when attempting to develop a regional model for self-government based on the potlatch. The study identifies the problems inherent in revitalizing traditional Carrier-Sekani values, social organizations, and political institutions; and the problems in translating them in terms of the roles found in Euro-Canadian society. In reviewing changes that have occurred in Carrier socio-political structures, it argues that culture change is at least partially responsible for model formulation problems.

This study suggests that the Carrier potlatch, as it is practiced today, celebrates family prerogatives; marks rites of passage, most notably funerals; and is quintessentially based on principles of reciprocal obligation between matrilineal descent units. Due to the nature of the potlatch and its function, it is incompatible with the purely political goals of Carrier government leaders.

This work concludes that a distinction can be made between the potlatch and the clan system that underlies it. The key to modeling Carrier and Sekani government may be found in the matrilineal clan system, which cross-cuts local village units and unites independent bands.

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I extend my gratitude to Chief Peter Quaw, Fort George Indian Band, and to Chief Leonard Thomas, Nak'azdli Indian Band, who allowed me to conduct field research in their territories. While this work does not necessarily reflect their points of

view, I hope that it proves to have some utility and aids them in their efforts.

Although too many to list individually, I would like to thank the Carrier Chiefs, support staff at the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council office, and the elders and band members whose knowledge made this project possible. Much of the credit for this thesis goes to CSTC and band researchers who have meticulously documented their own meetings, history, and culture. The errors contained in this thesis are my own.

My committee members have provided a great deal of encouragement and valuable insight. I am grateful to Michael Asch (my supervisor), and to David Bai and Gurston Dacks (committee members).I would also like to thank Susan Rowley who was initially a Committee Member, and Douglas Hudson, from Fraser Valley College, who provided additional support.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## The Context of the Study

The Federal Government has proposed change to the Canadian Constitution that will guarantee Native peoples the right to self-government. The government wants the undefined right to self-government immediately entrenched; and plans, over the next ten years, to negotiate self-government agreements with aboriginal peoples. These agreements would be subsequently entrenched in the Constitution. The Federal Government's proposal has a provision that will enable the courts to enforce the right to self-government if there is insufficient progress during the ten year transition phase (Government of Canada 1991:5).

According to Joe Clark, Minister of Constitutional Affairs, self-government for Native peoples will not mean separation from Canada nor suzerainty status, but will be more than "feathers and folk dances" -- "the negotiated exercise of real power by aboriginal communities over matters that affect them directly" (Canadian Press 1991:A2). The plan even suggests that Natives be represented in an elected Senate (Government of Canada 1991:5). While constitutional reform is expected to take some time to accomplish, the government is opting for another solution, what has been termed "Indian peoples' best short term hope," the option of legislative change (Siddon 1990:6).

The Federal government is pursuing the negotiation of community-based self-government outside the *Indian Act*. The negotiations' central goal is the recognition of traditional Native institutions as the "appropriate governing authorities" (Siddon 1990:6). The government claims that it is willing to negotiate any change that Native groups decide to put on the table, with the understanding that bands arrive at tailor-made arrangements suited to the specific conditions of the communities concerned (Siddon 1990:6).

John, Prince, and Adams (1989:1) write of the challenge facing Native peoples:

> In the last few years, we have all heard of our First Nations people talking about 'Self-Government.' However, most of our own people do not know what it means, or why it is necessary.
>
> The Government of Canada wanted the First Nations people of this country to define Self-Government. There is no way we could speak for the other 184 Bands [in British Columbia], but we, as the Carrier and Sekanis had to look at some sort of system by which we could govern ourself.

## The Research Problem

This thesis is about the Carrier-Sekani peoples who live in north-central British Columbia. In the thesis I trace the regional attempts to develop a model for self-government based on the bat'lats (potlatch), and the problems inherent with the process. Because the potlatch is a Carrier institution, and because I worked in two Carrier communities, the focus of the thesis will be on the Carrier, with Sekani culture and institutions receiving secondary analysis. My attention to the

Carrier is consistent with the political situation in the region because the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, (which is the largest institution promoting self-government), is dominated by Carrier people both in the number of bands and population. Since bat'lats government efforts are in the initial planning stages, I examined model formulation at the community and regional level rather than focusing on how Carrier-Sekani self-government could be integrated with the Canadian governing system.

## Methodology

This thesis is based on fourteen months of field experience that included participant observation, informal observation, and interviewing, conducted over a four year period while I worked on various projects with the Nak'azdli and Lheit-lit'enne bands. Information on Tribal Council activities came from published sources and public unpublished reports written by Tribal Council and band committees, and from my attendance at public meetings. Especially useful in the research were the *Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council Annual Reports* 1985-1991, and the *Carrier Sekani Hereditary Chiefs, Elders, Active Members and Balhats Seating Plan Report* (Poirier 1990) which is in draft form.

Since the problem of modelling self-government is a recent one, the published literature on the subject is minimal. I have relied on a few key academic articles that have addressed similar topics, and which are relevant to this study. These include, Long (1990) who examined political revitalization using the example of the Blood and Peigan Indians; Boldt and Long (1985), who detailed the differences between tribal traditions and Western political ideology; Torok (1972), who examined factionalism in Tyendinaga (Mowhawk) political life; Miller (1955), who looked at the question of authority in Native communities; Barsh (1986), who examined North American Indian political systems; and Cornell (1988), who detailed tribalization in the United States.

This thesis is not theoretically based. Rather, it is descriptive and relies on an applied inductive approach. The thesis is ethnological in that I describe contemporary Carrier-Sekani political structures and analyse the political process of self-government modelling. I also present a brief ethnography of two Nak'azdli potlatches.

The problems faced by the Carrier-Sekani are faced by many groups across Canada. I hope, through this thesis, to provide insight into the complexity of modelling self-government elsewhere, by contributing a case study of one regional group in the context of its unique history, culture, and circumstances. The method I have used is unusual in that I have approached the problem at a microscopic level. After a detailed look at past and present Carrier values and institutions I suggest a possible or a practical way to resolve issues. My work may provide a method for applied studies related to self-government modelling.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I trace the formation of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council as a political vehicle to forward Carrier-Sekani goals. I also examine the Tribal Council's attempts to find the appropriate level and units for self-government, and note the "growing pains" that the Carrier-Sekani have experienced during this process. In Chapter 2, I also discuss how the CSTC has attempted to resolve outstanding problems.

In Chapter 3, I point out the problems of defining the nation as it applies to bands, tribal level government, and inter-tribal level government. I also specify the political roles of a variety of traditional Carrier leaders, particularly the aza'ne (hereditary chiefs); and the problems of redefining these roles in the context of developing self-government. Structural problems that arise from historical circumstances, and some differences between Indian and western ideology, are described.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the role of the potlatch in Carrier society both past and present. I examine the structure and function of the potlatch and regional variation in potlatch practices. I point out that the potlatch today celebrates family prerogatives and marks rights of passage (most notably funerals), and that its key feature is reciprocal obligation between matrilineal descent units.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of my thesis research for Carrier-Sekani self-government. I suggest that the key to modelling self-government may be found in the clan system underlying the potlatch, rather than in the ceremony itself. I point out some problems in clan representation and suggest a method for correlating Carrier clans.

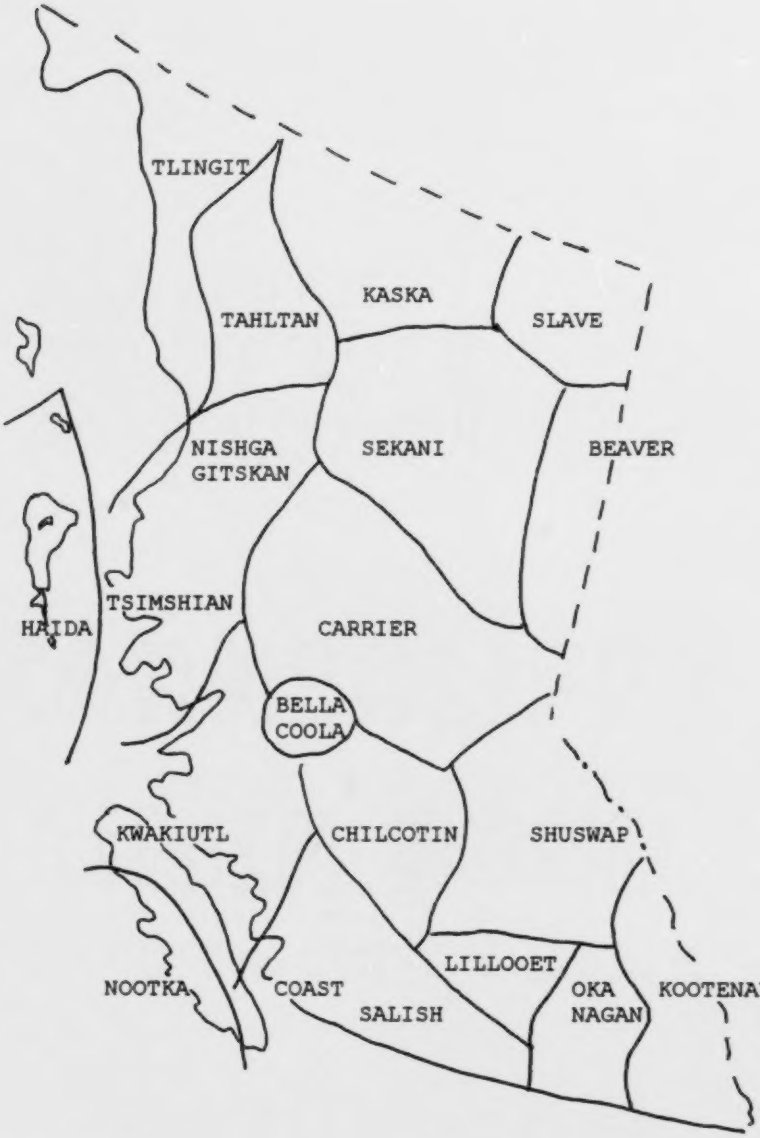
Here, I will introduce the Carrier and Sekani Indians, and discuss the historical relations between them.

## Introduction to the Carrier and Sekani Indians

The Carrier and Sekani peoples live in north-central B.C. in the areas shown in Figure 1. Carrier settlements were oriented to the various lakes and rivers in the Pacific drainage system, in the Fraser and Skeena watersheds; Sekani settlements were oriented to the lakes and rivers found in the Arctic drainage system. Carrier villages on the Fraser extend as far north as Takla Lake and as far south as Alexandria. The Babine Carrier occupy territory that drains into the Skeena system, and which includes Bulkley River and Babine Lake (Jenness 1932:32). The Sekani, located to the northeast of the Carrier, occupy the district around Bear Lake and the Parsnip and Finlay Rivers, in the Peace River region (Jenness 1932:377).

Geographic location determined largely which groups would interact; so, for example, the Carrier groups located near the Gitksan would intermarry and be more culturally similar to them. Likewise, southern Carrier groups interacted with the Bella Coola and Chilcotin, and were indirectly influenced by the Gitksan (Goldman 1941:396). Intermarriage and interaction with

**Figure 1 Indians of British Columbia**


TLINGIT
TAHLTAN
KASKA
SLAVE
NISHGA
GITSKAN
SEKANI
BEAVER
TSIMSHIAN
HAIDA
CARRIER
BELLA
COOLA
KWAKIUTL
CHILCOTIN
SHUSWAP
LILLOOET
NOOTKA
COAST
SALISH
OKA
NAGAN
KOOTENAY

Adapted from Fladmark (1986:7) and Duff (1953:16).

neighbouring groups have caused regional variability in organization, language, and customs.

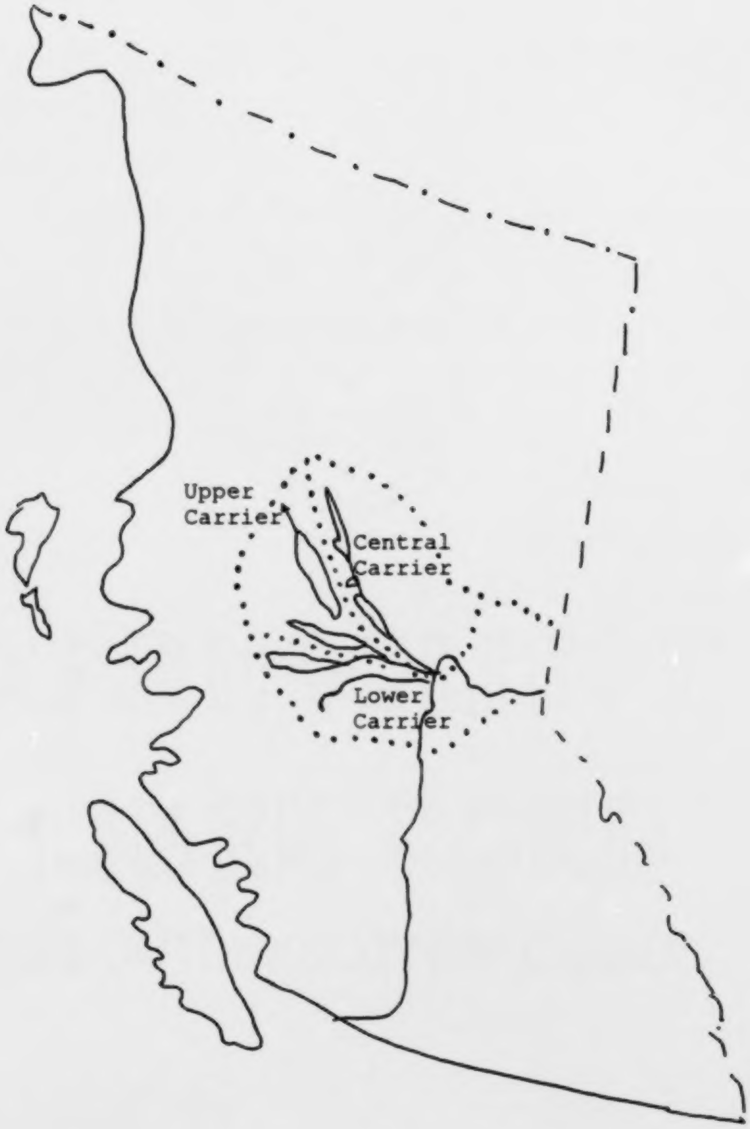
The Carrier have been subdivided into three language groups based on differences in dialects and culture traits: the Upper or Babine Carrier, the western most Carrier located around Babine Lake and the Bulkley Valley; the Central Carrier around Stuart Lake in the northeast; and the lower Carrier to the south. Each village had a distinct sub-dialect, however; and overlaps created language chains rather than discrete language groups (Hudson 1983:47). The tripartite classification shown in Figure 2 was not recognized by the Carrier themselves, who named only minor subdivisions (Morice 1893:27-28).

While both the Carrier and Sekani are Athapaskan speakers, the languages are quite distinct. The Sekani are more closely related linguistically to the Beaver Indians located to the east (Denniston 1981:433).

Goldman (1941:398) believes that early Carrier social organization was based on the extended family, the sadeku, which was composed of all individuals descended through the line of the grandfather. The first born male of a sibling group became detsa, the headman who regulated hunting and fishing activities. Hudson (1983:187) gives us the snatneku, the functional equivalent for the Central Carrier of the sadeku mentioned by Goldman.

Ecology and diffusion have been used to explain the differences in Carrier and Sekani social organization (cf.

Figure 2  Major Divisions of the Carrier Indians


Upper
Carrier
Central
Carrier
Lower
Carrier

Adapted from Cranny (1986:37), Tobey (1981:416), and Fladmark (1986:7).

Goldman 1941 and Steward 1955). For the Carrier, the abundant salmon resource base and the semi-permanent settlement it allowed, facilitated the adoption, through intermarriage, of a rank-potlatch system based on matrilineal descent. Recent Carrier specialists feel that the Carrier did not adopt the northwest coast system part and parcel (Kobrinsky 1977:209, Kobrinsky 1981:1, Hudson 1983:186). Kobrinsky (1977:209) writes that, "Tsimshianization was molded at every step by omnipresent interior Athapaskan tradition which prevails to the present day."

Salmon and freshwater fishes were the staple of the Carrier diet, and the Carrier spent part of the year in large groups congregated at good fishing locations. Duff (1964:17) calls these larger groups subtribes. Fourteen separate Carrier subtribes have been identified (cf. Tobey 1981:430-431). Examples include Tl'azt'enne, People at the Head of the Lake; Koo Dene, People at the Bottom of the Lake; Sai'kuz Wet'enne, People of the Sand; and Lheit-lit'enne, People Where the Two Rivers Meet.

The Sekani resource base differed from that of the Carrier, most notably in that the Arctic drainage system lacked salmon runs. The Sekani were largely hunters, relying on large and small game (moose, caribou, beaver) (Jenness 1932:379); but freshwater fishes (whitefish, trout, and suckers) were probably also important in their diet (Denniston 1981:436).

Unlike the Carrier, who were semi-sedentary and were identified with definite localities and villages, the Sekani did not form large, easily identifiable social groups (Duff 1964:16). Sekani organization was based on a system of regional bands, with membership determined through bilateral ties. Individual choice, flexibility, and mobility enabled the Sekani to cope with what is said to be a harsh environment (Steward 1961:737, Morice 1892:119).

In the nineteenth century four groups of Sekani were recognized: the Tse'kahne of Fort McLeod, the Yutuwichan of the Parsnip River, Susutten of the Finlay River and Bear Lake, and the Tseloni of the plateau country north of the Finlay River (Arima 1976:95), (Duff 1964:35).

The Carrier have been called Carrier because of the mortuary custom of a widow carrying her husband's ashes in a pouch on her back. Morice (1892:111) and Jenness (1932:363) report that the origin of the Carrier name is found in the Sekani term, Arelhne, which was translated into the English, "Carrier". According to Morice (1893:29), the Carrier referred to the Sekani as "People of the Beaver Dam"; but he does not specify if this term applied to all the groups now termed "Sekani", or one particular band. The Carriers refer to both the Sekani and Tahltan as Lhtatenne (Jenness 1943:481) and to themselves as Dakelhne (Morice 1892:11, Morice 1893:21), but they also used the same word to describe Indian people in general (Walker 1974:314, Morice n.d.;6).

Carrier-Sekani interaction intensified prior to direct contact as desired items, like metals from shipwrecks or trade, passed through indigenous networks. Alexander Mackenzie wrote that the Sekani had obtained their metal from the Carrier in exchange for beaver pelts and moose skins (Tobey 1981:417).

The Carrier's role as middlemen in the early fur trade increased the interaction of these two groups. The Carrier would travel to the coast and trade with other native groups and Europeans, and would travel home, thus enabling the Sekani on the distant Parsnip River system to obtain trade goods (Tobey 1981:417).

Harmon (1922:266) recorded in his journal that the Sekani:

> . . . are remarkably fond of the country, where they now are; and frequently intermarry with the Carriers, and pass part of their time with them at their villages. They have also adopted many of the customs of the Carriers, one of which is, to burn their dead.

Denniston (1981:435) states that most of the contact of the Sekani with Carrier groups was across the Arctic Pacific drainage divide: the Sekani of the Parsnip and Finlay Basins with the Bulkley Carriers at the North end of Babine Lake; the Yutuwichan with the Carrier of Stuart and Fraser lakes; and the Tse'kahne primarily with the Carrier of the Upper Fraser River.

Intermarriage between the Gitksan, Carrier, and Sekani resulted in the latter adopting the nobility-potlatch complex as well. Some authors believed that the Sekani could not maintain the rank-potlatch complex due to a lack of resources. Morice (1892:119) writes that the Sekani were:

> obliged to desist [potlatching], owing to the precarious life they lead, having constantly to roam over forests and mountains in search of food, as there is no salmon stream in their country.

Steward (1961:737) mentions that the Carrier were pushing eastward incorporating Sekani tracts of land. He also mentions that Carrier lands at Stoney Creek were being brought under the control of the Fort St. James' nobles (Steward 1961:740). Jenness (1932:381) stated that the Sekani abandoned the potlatch phratry system when they found it did not aid them in the fur trade, although they revived it several times. One of these occasions was in 1924, when Jenness visited the Sekani. He attributed the revival to renewed Carrier-Sekani contact and cooperation (Jenness 1937:67-71).

> Although relations between Carrier and Sekani were, on the whole, friendly, the two peoples looked down on each other; sometimes there were bloody quarrels between them. Certain Sekani bands had predominantly hostile relations with certain Carrier groups . . . . (Denniston 1981:435)

Jenness (1932:379) states that the Sekani "retain the scorn of true hunters for fishermen, and speak contemptuously of the Carrier as 'Fisheaters' "; but as Teit (1909:524) noted, "often the Sekani moved to the salmon runs of the Carrier and exploited this resource whenever it was possible."

While I was in the field, a Tse'kahne man from McLeod Lake and a Carrier woman from Nak'azdli confirmed that a friendly rivalry still exists between the two groups. The Sekani man told me they refer to the Carrier as "Rotten fish-eaters," and the Carrier woman told me they refer to the Tse'kahne as "Hang around the Fort Indians." The two consulted were in fact first cousins. As the woman stated, "Our mothers were sisters -- he's Carrier, he's Frog clan."

The land claim overlap between the McLeod Lake and Nak'azdli Indian Band has been caused by intermarriage between these two groups. A large number of Nak'azdli people trace part of their heritage, at least four generations back, to a man affectionately known as Lhtaten (Sekani) Sam.

# Chapter 2 The Struggle for Self-Government

In this chapter I trace the tribalization process in which two separate Athapaskan-speaking groups, the Carrier and Sekani, united to form one tribal council. I also trace the aspirations and goals of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council and member bands as they relate to land claims and self-government negotiations. I point out a problem that evolved through the tribalization process, and which continues to hamper model development.

## The Lakes District Council of Chiefs

Early Carrier and Sekani political organization was sparked by Andrew Paull, who, prior to 1958,travelled throughout British Columbia in an attempt to form a province-wide Indian organization (Tennant 1982:30). In 1958 and 1959, George Manuel, Paull's successor, travelled through the interior soliciting support from every band including those in Burns Lake and Vanderhoof, where he gained the support of the majority of the population. Manuel gained "the support of eleven of the seventeen Carrier bands" (Tennant 1982:36).

At about the same time, a new type of organization was influencing how the main units of local indigenous political activity would develop (Tennant 1982:31). This type of organization was the tribal council, which emerged when Frank Calder organized the Nishga in 1955. The tribal council differed from earlier organizations in that it was usually composed of one linguistic (tribal) group, and was concerned with a "wide range of social and economic objectives" (Tennant 1982:37).

Edward John (1986a:3) writes of the dissatisfaction that influenced early Carrier and Sekani political organization:

> Politically, the Department of Indian Affairs always made decisions on behalf of our people; and ran our affairs. It wasn't until the mid 1960's when some of our people began to voice their desire to control their own programs, and demanded that administrative offices be set up in their own villages. There were no budgets of any sort to assist our Chiefs or spokesmen of the early days; however these men and women pursued their dreams even if it meant hitchhiking and going without personally.

Ron Seymour describes some of the early lobbying trips to Carrier and Sekani Reserves:

> I was first elected Chief in '65. I went for two terms kind of ignorant to most of the stuff that was going on. But it was the middle of my second term that I got together with a few of the older chiefs. And we got to talking, "Wouldn't it be great to start up something here where all the people within the area would be united and be able to fight with one voice against the government and get what we want." We try to get what we want. So, we started going on road trips, I'd cover an area from here to McLeod and up in Ingenika and Fort Ware, talk to the people around there. Go out west, into Stoney Creek, Nautley. In the mean time Nick Prince would be doing his own area. He would be up into Tachie, Takla, Fort St. James into Stoney Creek, making trips the same as I am. And down in the far end was Frank Tibbets, he was doing the same thing. We were, you know, campaigning. We had a goal. We had something to do. So, we finally convinced say, half a dozen of the chiefs in the area that we should start speaking united. That was before '69.

In 1968, the Lakes District Council of Chiefs had Carrier representatives from Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, Fort Fraser, Vanderhoof, Fort St. James, and Prince George. Meetings were initially held about once a year (John 1986a:3).

At about the same time, consultation meetings were held between the federal government and Indian groups, with the intent to get suggestions from the latter on amendments to the *Indian Act*. In British Columbia, five zones were established;

and Nick Prince from Fort St. James was named a zone leader. Ron Seymour provides insight into local events:

> In '69, the Department of Indian Affairs come around. They're doing their rounds of inquiries to see what the Indian people were thinking. Out of that came the White Paper policy of '69. But also out of that same round, The Lakes District Council of Chiefs got organized. We all got together before the meeting started - and we got together and said this is what we're going to do. So it was formed. Nick Prince was our first President. Thinking we're going to talk in a united voice we went to those meeting there, we did okay. Didn't really accomplish much but we were led to believe we accomplished a lot by the Department. Those were sweet talkers, they were back then. But this is one thing that was accomplished by those rounds of meeting was the Council of Chiefs was formed. And Nick, he ran the Council for about a year, year and a half. I got elected as their chairman. Spent six and a half years putting the Tribal Council together. I'd represent them down south. Represent back in Ottawa you know, speaking on their behalf. Did a few radical things, trying to get the attention of the government. Made a few radical announcements. But I thought that we accomplished a little bit there by being the Council of Chiefs. We got a few things done, we got a few changes made. I did that until mid '70s.

The announcement of the "white paper" (probably printed before the consultation meetings) caused an intensification of Native political activity; especially when the federal government announced its new policy, which as Asch (1984:8) points out, was "based on the necessity of rapidly assimilating native peoples into Canadian society." John (1986a:3) writes that the Council of Chiefs had to gather not simply to socialize, but to "have one voice" because the survival of "the aboriginal people of the land" was at stake. The white paper resulted in nation-wide lobbying, and its policy was never implemented.

In 1971, the Nishga Tribal Council went to court; and this case, too, was to have a dramatic impact on indigenous peoples including the Carrier and Sekani. Asch (1984:51), summarizing the issues in this case, writes that:

> Although the Nishga lost their case on a 4 to 3 judgement, the decision represented something of a new departure. It established, first of all, the certainty that at least one group possessed rights at the time of contact that were reconcilable with Canadian law. Second, and more significantly, there was the strong possibility that at least one of these rights - the usufruct title, in at least the Nass Valley of British Columbia - had survived colonial legislation and was still in existence. Hence, the case asserted the possibility that aboriginal peoples, . . . still possessed rights that the contemporary court would recognize as existing, and therefore uphold.

Ron Seymour discusses the first shift in the Lakes District Council of Chiefs' goals after the Calder Case.

> Within our Tribal area when we first started in the mid '60s the emphasis was on programs, government programs. We were trying to get what we were entitled to from the government. And then into the very late '60s into the '70s we started talking land claims. Because the people are starting to realize we are not going to get what we want from the government by going the program route. So, we're going to have to start getting the government to the table to start talking to us and the only way we're going to do that is through land claims. Saying, "Okay this is our land we haven't surrendered it. You guys are going to have to talk to us to get our land from us. To pay for that land." You know for you people to be able to say that you're the governor, the boss of the land, they had to settle that land claim. Into the early 70s that was the main issue, land claims. And all the people were ignorant to land claims. They were ignorant to that, they didn't know what we were talking about. The native people back there weren't saying, the government got our land and they never defeated us in war so it's still our land. The attitude they had back then was that there's my land and if there's a farm back there so what - it's still my land, that farmer can move. But there was very few of them that realized, that understood, what land claims really meant. So we had to go on an educating tour and we had to send people out into the reserves, as workers, you know as land claim workers. . . .

As the result of governmental consultation, past interaction, close geographical proximity, and a common DIA regional district, the two linguistically distinct groups, the Carrier and Sekani, began to organize to form one tribal council. Tribalization in this region, however, did not cleanly follow linguistic boundaries; and, for example, the Wet'suwet'en Carrier, in the far western portion of the territory, united with the Gitksan; the southern Carrier groups (Nazko, Kluskus, and Alexandria Bands) united with the Chilcotin Bands to form the Caribou Tribal Council.

## The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council

In 1979, The Lakes District Council of Chiefs was renamed the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC), and was incorporated under the B.C. Societies Act (John 1986a:3). The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council lost the support of Sekani bands when they attempted to form a Sekani Tribal Council. This attempt, however, failed. The Fort Ware Band joined the Kaska Dene Tribal Council. The McLeod Lake Band chose to remain independent. The Ingenika Band went with the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council.

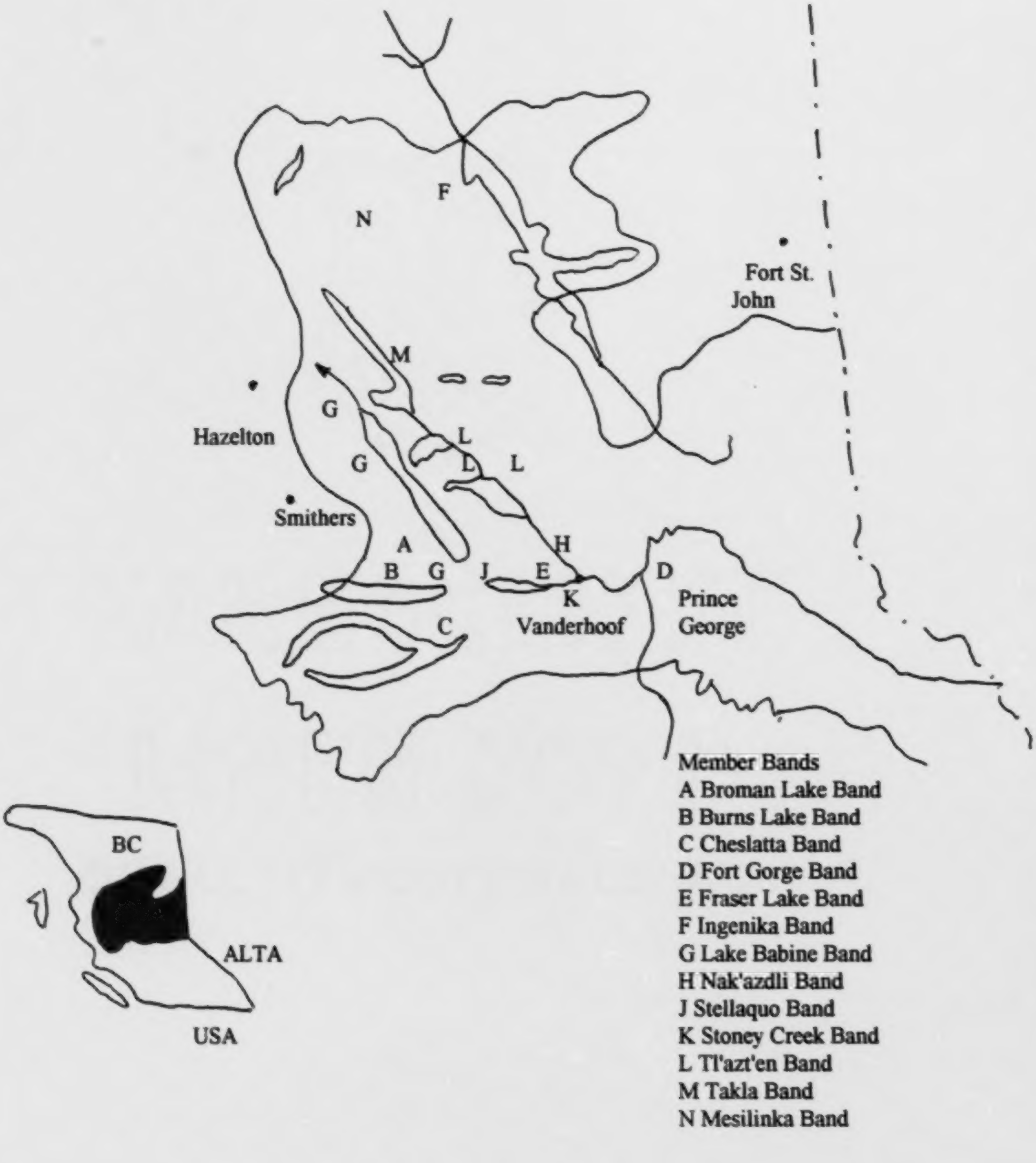
Figure 3 lists Carrier-Sekani member bands and their locations in CSTC Territory. The Nee Tahi Buhn Band used tooccupy Position I, but has since been removed from CSTC maps. Figure 3 represents the member bands as of 1989.

The single most important issue to the Tribal Council has been recognition of aboriginal title to the land and its resources (John 1986b:3). After the Calder Case, the CSTC had that avenue open to them through the Federal Comprehensive Claims process (cf. Asch 1984:65). In April of 1982, the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council submitted to the Government of Canada a declaration and claim of aboriginal rights and title. This declaration confirmed that each individual band affiliated with the Tribal Council is a sovereign Nation, and title to the land was never "surrendered, sold or conquered" (Prince 1986:13).

The land claim filed by the CSTC includes a claim for title to 69,000 square miles in central British Columbia (Seymour 1986:11). This area, shown in Figure 3, is known as the "Carrier Impact Area" -- where the Carrier and Sekani people both traditionally and presently, hunt, fish, and trap. Through the claim, the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council is also pursuing political rights, including the right to live and practice their way of life, to control the resources of the "Carrier Impact Area" and the Carrier fisheries, and to grant legal rights or titles. The CSTC is asking that there be no alteration of lakes or rivers until the settlement is negotiated. The Tribal Council also seeks compensation for the environmental destruction to Carrier lands caused by mega-projects, like Kemano I, which have resulted in damage to the habitat on which the Carrier rely, reduction in resources, flooding of lands, destruction of homes and harvesting areas, erosion of the land, pollution, and damage to navigation.

In October of 1983, the Government of Canada accepted the Carrier-Sekani comprehensive claim for negotiation (Prince

Figure 3 Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council Member Bands and Territory


F
N
Fort St. John
M
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Hazelton
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K
Vanderhoof
Prince George
C
BC
ALTA
USA
Member Bands
A Broman Lake Band
B Burns Lake Band
C Cheslatta Band
D Fort Gorge Band
E Fraser Lake Band
F Ingenika Band
G Lake Babine Band
H Nak'azdli Band
J Stellaquo Band
K Stoney Creek Band
L Tl'azt'en Band
M Takla Band
N Mesilinka Band

Adapted from Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council (1989a).

1986:13). At that time, the Federal Government maintained that the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council had a right to negotiate a settlement of aboriginal title and rights, but that negotiations could only proceed with the agreement of the Crown Right of B.C. because the land that was necessary for the land claim portion of the settlement is held by the province. The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council's claim was put on the negotiations waiting list in eleventh place (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 1990d:7).

In 1984, the member bands of the CSTC signed the *Carrier and Sekani Accord,* which, in substance, is like the now-famous *Dene Declaration* of 1975 (cf. Asch 1984:33). The Carrier Accord is a strong political statement, which affirmed the sovereignty, political unity, and territorial integrity of the Carrier-Sekani nations. It asserted the aboriginal right of the Carrier and Sekani to possession and control over their traditional territories (lands and resources), to cultural self-determination, and to self-government (Carrier-Sekani Accord 1984).

In 1986, the CSTC represented thirteen Indian Bands with a total population of about thirteen thousand (John 1986a:3). They retained the name Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council despite the fact that they were an association largely composed of Carrier bands. In 1987, the Tribal Council began casually using the term Yinka Dene, People of the Earth, to describe its membership. This term was symbolically important because it represented the first step to self-determination -- it discarded the labels placed on the Carrier and Sekani by outsiders.

Asch (1984:26) writes that, "Aboriginal people have long maintained that they have 'special' rights that differentiate them from other Canadians." He writes:

> In my understanding, the nub of the position of the native organization is that aboriginal peoples have the right to maintain ways of life that are distinct from those of recent immigrants to Canada. (Asch 1984:37)

John (1986b:3) maintains that so far "special status" has come to the Indian in the form of discriminatory acts, such as the *Indian Act* (1927), which made it illegal to raise money or to hire a lawyer to pursue land claims, the same Act which earlier, in the 1880s, made it illegal to potlatch; the Land Ordinance Act of 1870, which stated that Indians were not allowed to pre-exempt land in B.C.; and the Canada Election Act (1952) which prohibited native people from voting in the federal election until 1960. Agreeing with Asch in substance but not language, John (1986b:3) states that the Carrier-Sekani people "do not seek any special status. Rather . . . a rightful place in Canada as the original inhabitants of the land."

The CSTC Self-Determination Committee (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991c:n.p.) explain special status:

> One of the most essential aspects of [self-determination] is that we must all believe that we are sovereign nations. . . . Specifically, what [are we] sovereign about and why [do] we want to change the existing relationship with the rest of Canada? What is it within us that is rejecting the non-native beliefs and values, when they are perceived as good for the majority society? It is because we are separate and distinct from them. We have our own beliefs and values that have been passed down to us by our ancestors, which were handed down to them by the Creator.

> After many years of being subjected against our will, we now have the opportunity, a window, in which to prepare for our own destiny and, through our combined efforts we will achieve it.

## Self-Government and the State

The provincial government's long standing policy has been to refuse to acknowledge any of the rights the Carrier and Sekani (and other groups) claim to have to land and resources. The provincial government maintained that the federal government assumed all responsibility for Native People under Section 91-24 of the B.N.A. Act, and it was their responsibility to negotiate and to compensate for outstanding claims (Hudson 1988:1). The Province of British Columbia, if it saw self-government at all, envisioned it within the current statutory framework -- that is, under the *Indian Act;* its amendments such as Bill C-115; and alternate funding agreements (Letter from Jack Weisgerber, October 30, 1989). Joe Michell (1989:2) summarized Carrier-Sekani's frustration when dealing with the Province:

> The Tribal Council has made several attempts to convince the Provincial Government that they **have to** address *outstanding land claims issues* and *the entrenchment of Aboriginal Title and Rights in the Canadian Constitution*, but have been repeatedly informed that they *do not recognize* that First Nations have those rights.

In 1990, the Government of British Columbia radically altered its position; and decided to join in the land claims negotiation process. On December 3, Bill Wilson (Chairman of the First Nations Congress), Tom Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), and Jack Weisgerber (B.C. Native Affairs Minister) announced the formation of a task force to "propose how to organize the negotiation of B.C. native land claims" (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 1990c:1). The Task Force had a six month time frame (from January to June 1991), to define:

> the scope of claims negotiated in the province; the process of negotiation, including time frames; and the public education to promote wider understanding of the purpose and process involved in settling the comprehensive land claim of B.C. Indian people. (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 1990c:1)

In June of 1991, the Task Force presented its final report, which made nineteen recommendations, which outlined a six-stage process to be followed in treaty negotiations, and which called for the establishment of an independent treaty commission (British Columbia Claims Task Force Report 1991). As with the community-based negotiation process, the Task Force Report indicates that any relevant issue may be brought to the negotiating table, including First Nation government and the constitution. The new process could also see up to thirty negotiations occurring simultaneously (Dolha 1991:1).

Many Native leaders are very optimistic about tripartite negotiations. Joe Mathias has been quoted as saying:

> For the first time in Canadian history, First Nations leaders and their representatives had direct input into a policy that affects our lives, as a people, and effects white people's lives. We've never had this input ever in our history, in terms of this big question of aboriginal title and land claims . . . . We're recommending to all parties to seize the day. Make a decision. Get on with the job . . . . (Dolha 1991:1)

Many Native leaders have had reservations about the process feeling that they are being rushed and that the governments involved will try to separate the land issue from the self-government issue (Monk 1991:6).

Chief Edward John, of the Tl'azt'enne band, sat on the Task Force, and CSTC chiefs and land claims staff attended the meetings. The Tribal Council nas submitted its position in writing; and as early as May 1991, sent a delegation to Ottawa to put the government on notice of their intention to begin the process next summer (Christensen 1991b:1).

As I pointed out in Chapter 1, the federal government's policy, pending constitutional recognition of the right to self-government, has been to proceed with the negotiation of program transfers from the Federal Government to Indian Bands. Long (1990:751) provides a summary of the approach:

> With discussions over constitutionally entrenched native Indian self-government at a standstill, the federal government is pursuing a parallel non-constitutional policy initiative to provide for a limited degree of Indian self-government. This initiative commits the federal government to 'community-based self-government negotiations' with Indian bands or tribal groups with the objective of bringing about legislative arrangements for limited self-government outside the *Indian Act*. The aim of this approach is to develop a form of legislation-based Indian self-administration that would help to satisfy the demand of Indian leaders for greater legal, administrative and financial autonomy for tribal governments.

According to Angus (1989:21), any form of real self-government requires 1) state recognition of native authority in specific areas of jurisdiction; 2) a recognized structure for exercising that authority; and 3) an economic base to support the structure. Angus (1989:21) points out that the federal government has acted to deny Native peoples the right to open-ended recognition of self-government whenever the issue has arisen. At the constitutional level they have offered only the right to **negotiate** self-government. So far, in land claims negotiations the government, fearing that any recognition of a right to self-government would establish a legal precedent, has steered away from the entire issue (Angus 1989:21)(cf. the Dene-Metis arrangement outlined in Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 1990d:3). This situation may develope in the B.C. negotiations as well.

At one time the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council was pursuing self-government through devolution (phasing out the Indian Affairs Department and transferring programs to Indian Bands and Tribal Councils). In 1986, Edward John (1986a:3) wrote that:

> As we move towards becoming once again "decision-makers" pertaining to our own affairs; we desire to phase out the Department of Indian Affairs and other well meaning organizations that can never really represent our needs. This to us is Self-Government: and we believe that we can do it. Until that happens, we as the Carrier and Sekani people; as you know us, will never be satisfied.

In January 1987, the CSTC, on behalf of its bands, negotiated a framework agreement with Minister Bill McKnight. After a few meetings with the Department, the agreement was cancelled. The CSTC claims that without prior discussion program dollars were cut unilaterally. This action was seen as a breach of the framework agreement (Monk 1987:5). Additionally, the government was advocating self-government along the Sechelt model:

> This model is based on the delegation of certain provincial and federal authority to a Band with the final and residual authority resting with the federal and provincial government. There is no recognition in the Constitution of Canada for this model. (John 1988:6)

Angus (1989:23) provides a critique of the government's position that will:

> . . . legally [allow] Ottawa to retain complete control over what powers are being transferred to native people (and when they are transferred); politically and legally, it will leave Ottawa with less responsibility for what happens in native communities in the future; and financially the New Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) - essentially, block funding - will permit more stable, and hence predictable, federal spending in the future. (Angus 1989:22-23)

According to Angus (1989:20), self-government negotiations provide an historic opportunity for the Federal Government "to restructure its legal, political and fiscal relations with Native people." Essentially it provides the government with the opportunity of "getting out of the native business" (Angus 1989:20).

According to the criteria established above, the government is not proposing actual "self-government" through the community-based negotiation process, because bands could only exercise jurisdiction in those areas which Ottawa permits. Furthermore, self-government requires sufficient resources to be successful -- money would come from federal transfer payments, not greater access to lands and resources in traditional territories (Angus 1989:23).

Although some member bands and Tribal Council portfolios are seeking, or have, control under Alternate Funding Arrangements, this arrangement is seen as "simply the administration of government programs by Bands and or Tribal groups" (John 1988:6). It is not viewed as real self-government.

## The History of Potlatch Model Development

Boldt and Long (1985:342) write that:

> The Canadian government has made it clear that it will not accept sovereignty for Canada's Indians. For most Indians, assimilation into Canadian culture is repugnant and unacceptable. Thus, the acceptable model for a relationship between the federal government and Canada's Indians lies somewhere between assimilation and sovereignty.
>
> Most Indian peoples are committed to a separate social system with corresponding networks of social institutions that are congruent with their historical tribal arrangements and that are based on their traditional identity, language, religion, philosophy and customs. The Canadian Government is ready to accept Indian self-government. The challenge for Indian leaders is to develop a model of self-government that is acceptable to Canadian government and that gives Indians internal self-determination without compromising fundamental traditional values.

After the breach of the framework agreement, the CSTC held two important planning sessions (in September, 1986 and in April, 1987) in order to discuss the development of a local and regional self-government model. It was at that time that "everybody realized that the Potlatch System [was] the route to Self-Government" (Monk 1987:5). The major components and direction for self-government, at that time, were recognized as requiring quite "some time to materialize" (Quaw 1987:15). The chiefs passed a motion to institute a transitional form of self-government based on the hereditary system. The transitional model was to be fully operational by 1990. The 1988 Annual General Assembly was supposed to see the election of the Tribal Chief and Vice-Tribal Chief by traditional custom (Quaw, pers. comm. 1988).

In February 1988, the chiefs decided to hire a consultant to investigate issues regarding government. This resulted in the establishment of the Carrier-Sekani Government Commission, and the appointment of Dr. Frank Cassidy, from the University of Victoria, as the sole commissioner. Cassidy was instructed to: investigate models that the Carrier-Sekani peoples "could consider for long-term political and social-economic development" (John 1988:6). He was also instructed to "advise the Carrier and Sekani peoples on the future of their governments, the traditional basis of these governments, and their relationship to Canada" (Cassidy 1988a:1). According to Cassidy (1988a:2-3), his task was to record:

> what the Commission heard and recommendations for the future on the structures of Carrier and Sekani governments; the processes necessary for these governments to serve the will of the people; and the strategies that may be used to further strengthen Carrier Sekani government.

Cassidy wrote that he was to give advice on matters such as:

> The role of traditional ways such as the potlatch in the Carrier and Sekani governing system of today.
>
> The roles of Band Councils, the Tribal Council and other regional governing authorities and their relationship to one another.
>
> The ways in which Carrier and Sekani governments can be kept accountable to the people.
>
> The ways in which Carrier and Sekani governments can maintain proper control over the administration of their programs.
>
> The relationship of Carrier and Sekani governments with the governments of Canada and British Columbia. (Cassidy 1988a:1-2)

The Commission was also to conduct "historical research on Carrier and Sekani government, particularly on the traditional ways such as the potlatch" (Cassidy 1988a:3).

After visiting each of the Carrier and Sekani communities and meeting with the general band membership, elders, and band chiefs and councils, the Commissioner presented his report at the Annual General Assembly held on July 13, 1988, in Burns Lake. In his oral report Cassidy made eight broad recommendations concerning self-government:

1. That the Tribal Council define its political priorities, the major focus of which should be comprehensive and specific land claims.

2. That the Tribal Council develop an action-oriented strategic plan that is in line with its political priorities.

3. That the Tribal Council create an Elders and Hereditary Chiefs Council as another organizational structure added at the Tribal Council level.

4. That the Tribal Council help bands to develop elders and hereditary chiefs councils and work to research and articulate the history of the Carrier Sekani People.

5. That the Tribal Council organize its administrative structure to facilitate administration of programs and services at the band level.

6. That the CSTC administration staff be put on the CSTC Administration and Finance Committee and removed from political matters.

7. That the Tribal Council assist bands that want to move towards self-government by providing a self-government program. This would be designed to assist in restructuring band level government. It would also assist in evaluating the bands' relationship to the provincial and federal governments.

8. That the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council proceed forward with arrangements with the federal and provincial governments concerning Carrier-Sekani government broadly, and in relationship to specific programs.

Cassidy recommended that leaders take note of the following principles: a) That agreements do not violate aboriginal rights and real self-government; b) that basic policies and directives are laid down by Carrier Sekani governments, not the federal or provincial governments; c) that the levels of services and finances not be reduced but increased; d) that accountability be to the Carrier-Sekani people's first and foremost; e) that everything be done in public (Cassidy: Paraphrased transcription from the Carrier-Sekani Annual General Assembly, July 13, 1988).

In his concluding remarks Cassidy turned the problem of the actual self-government model back to the people. He said:

> I have made a number of recommendations here, but that recommendation about elders and hereditary chiefs in a formal arrangement in one way or another at the tribal council level and assistance at the band level is just about the most important recommendation that I could come up with . . . .
>
> The best recommendation that I can give you is to put that problem firmly on the laps of the people who are best able to deal with it. And those people are not consultants, they are not authorities on self-government or Indian governments somewhere else, those people are your own hereditary chiefs and elders. Those people have the knowledge to deal with that problem . . . .
>
> What I finally realized is what needs to happen is that there needs to be formal recognition in a structural way, in an organizational way, at the tribal council level, of the authority and power of the elders and hereditary chiefs. (Cassidy: Transcription from the CSTC Annual General Assembly, July 13, 1988)

In response to Cassidy's report there was discussion of how the eight recommendations should be structured and implemented. For example, on how the elders' and hereditary chiefs' council would be established, how it would function, and how it would be financed.

Edward John remarked that the system of elected chiefs and band councils is a recent institution imposed by the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada, under their Constitution. Rejecting the addition of an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council as self-government, he called for the "proper recognition and authority of the traditional leaders."

> We've got to start trusting ourselves now. We don't have to have a society. Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council is just a registered society. Just another registered society that's all it is. It's a convenient vehicle for us to move and mobilize and to get things going. That's what it is. I think that Recommendation Number Three should be stronger. I don't think that the hereditary chiefs should just be an adjunct or just a small part to Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council. We have to form a regional government of our people and its not Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council the society - its the Carrier Sekani or Yinka Dene Government. Who are the people that's going to be in there. The aza'ne. The clans can decide who their representatives are going to be. (John: Transcription from the Carrier-Sekani Annual General Assembly, July 13, 1988)

It was established that Cassidy's report was an interim one, with a more detailed report being put forth at a Special Assembly to be held in September of 1988. A motion was passed that five people aid Cassidy in clarifying his final recommendations, and do follow-up work by "considering and formulating more specific proposals which could be offered at the Special Assembly in September" (Cassidy 1988b:1). A motion was also passed that the first implementation of traditional bat'lats government be postponed until 1992.

At the Special Assembly held on September 20-22, 1988, in Burns Lake, a Working Committee reviewed Cassidy's (1988b) final report, which was "more specific" (Cassidy 1988b:1). In it, Cassidy stated that it was the wish of the people that the potlatch not be touched by external forces (Cassidy 1988b:8). At the Assembly it was recommended that each band follow up on Cassidy's report by ensuring that band members receive a copy of the final document. The bands were then to provide feedback to the Tribal Council. Response was minimal, and before the 1989 Annual General Assembly a Feedback Committee was appointed to travel to each of the 13 Carrier and Sekani communities and report grass roots' views on bat'lats government.

The Committee (John, Prince, Adams) reported that many chiefs and councils had little or no knowledge of the Working Committee's report; many people had no knowledge of what the "true" bat'lats system is, or was, and felt they needed to be educated before they could determine whether it was a good way to govern in the future; many thought that the bat'lats government was being imposed upon the bands without other alternatives being offered. In summary, "the majority of the people surveyed were confused about bat'lats government" (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:3-4).

To follow up on the work of the Cassidy Commission, the Committee proposed that the CSTC employ a full-time self-government coordinator and band researchers to document Carrier and Sekani history and culture; that the band researchers organize a band elders' advisory council for self-government; and that the CSTC finds financial means to ensure that the work of the self-government commission continue regardless of funding (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:13-14).

Following the Feedback Committee's recommendations the Assembly passed a number of resolutions: that the procedures of the bat'lats system be documented by December 1989; that elections for Chief and Vice-Tribal Chief be held at the Annual General Assembly as usual until a new self-government structure was established; that the present name CSTC remain in use until the new self-government structure was developed; that the CSTC hire a full time self-government coordinator and one researcher for each band to research proper history, laws, and principles respecting traditional government; that the self-government commission continue as a high priority; and that sufficient funds be allotted for these purposes (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1989c:n.p.).

Although not formerly stated in any of the reports, the Cassidy Commission was faced with two tasks. One was to look at future self-government and its modelling, and the other was to sort out the current organization of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council and its relationship to its member bands. (At least four of the eight Cassidy recommendations deal with restructuring the Tribal Council and the other four deal with future self-government plans.) The need to examine and reorganize the Tribal Council stems from events that occurred in the tribalization process.

## Band Versus Regional Level Government

The band system originated because the Indian Affairs Branch could find no effective Native group to work with that was larger than the local group (Duff 1964:106). While the structure of the band system of representation was in place relatively early it was not implemented, especially in remote areas; in the 1950s there were still a large number of Indian groups in the interior who had not set up band councils. After 1951 (the revision of the Indian Act), there was an increase in the implementation of the band system.

Under the *Indian Act*, each band is a distinct legal unit with its own band list, its own funds, and its own reserve (Duff 1964:72). Each band has a council consisting of a chief, and from two (like the Fort George Indian Band) to twelve councillors (like the Nak'azdli Indian Band) depending on its relative size.

The band system of government was a training ground for teaching the techniques of government. According to Duff (1964:106), because the band was "usually too small a unit to be effective," the Indian Affairs Branch amalgamated larger groups with smaller ones, and actively worked to establish "agencies" or "area councils." As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council formation was, in part, a Native reaction to larger issues that affected them.

Initially, the CSTC provided services in all the areas that affected its member Bands, including education, social services, economic development, recreation, capital development, finance, natural resources, communications, and land claims and self-government. For each of these separate areas a portfolio system was established and assigned to a chief or band member who acted as a chairperson or head of the portfolio (John 1985:2).

The Tribal Council's mandate was a dual one. It assisted and/or acted on behalf of band councils, which were not yet sufficiently bureaucratized to meet the expectations and requirements of the Department of Indian Affairs. It also acted as the major lobbying agency in matters that affected the entire region (for example the Constitution, self-government and land claims, and the Kemano I and II projects) (John 1986b:2).

Individual Carrier bands also worked under the portfolio system, and in the past several years have gained independence and experience in running their affairs at the village level. A few chiefs have developed a "go it alone attitude"; and the CSTC, in their opinion, now either duplicates services they provide, or no longer assists them at all. As Long (1990:767) points out:

> Initially, service delivery was the responsibility of the Indian agency . . . . By the early 1970s proliferation of band administrative functions had begun to occur as tribal government took over many of the traditional Indian agency responsibilities . . . .
>
> Within its function of implementing DIAND's policies and programmes, the tribal bureaucracy has acquired a decision-making capability that has no parallel in other governments in Canada.

Cornell (1988:36-37) traces the effect of tribalization on Indian groups in the United States:

> This account implicitly suggests that the tribalizing process has been essentially unifying. In terms of formal structures this is certainly the case. Distinct groups have been united, first circumstantially or as an indigenous response to changing conditions, later through the implementation of the reservation system, finally

> through federally-sponsored tribal governments. More commonly unification has occurred within single nations, as less inclusive socio-political divisions have given way to more inclusive ones. Yet the resultant unity is often more apparent than real, . . . . In fact, there have been deep divisions within many, if not most, Indian groups, divisions often exacerbated by the tribalizing process itself.

He continues:

> Tribalism heightened factional difficulties. Political centralization inevitably reduced the influence of some groups and individuals and increased that of others. As power became more centralized, competition for it increased. (Cornell 1988:37)

Cornell points out that:

> The problem, however, goes beyond power struggles . . . . In such situations the conflict has less to do with control over a particular tribal structure than with the appropriateness of present governing institutions to serve the needs of Indian communities. Some groups responded to this situation by withdrawing. (Cornell 1988:39)

In 1990, some Carrier Band Chiefs expressed their growing discontent with the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council:

> At present, the Chiefs are concerned that the CSTC has grown in an uncontrolled way into a bureaucracy that resembles too much the DIA administration it was supposed to replace. Too often it appears that the CSTC competes with its own member Bands for political power, administrative control and financial resources. The authority of the Chiefs has been curbed by the growth of a powerful central administration in the main office, and an increasing dependence on advisory positions, DIA regulated programs and extensive paperwork that predetermines the kinds of decisions Chiefs are able to make.
>
> The authority of the Chiefs is also undermined by the existence of executive positions with an independent political power base stemming from election at the Annual General Assembly. The Tribal Chief and Vice Tribal Chief do not bear the same direct responsibility as do Band Chiefs for facing the day-to-day needs and problems of Band members at the community level. Nevertheless, the political power and decision-making authority of the Tribal Chief and Vice Tribal Chief often appears to overshadow that of the Band Chiefs. This is in direct contradiction with the fact that, under the CSTC constitution, the Council of Chiefs has the full

> responsibility and power to act as the Board of Directors of the organization.
>
> Another aspect of the increasingly dominant role of the main office of CSTC is the way the CSTC is represented in outside organizations. . . . It is felt that political affiliations with such outside organizations should be sanctioned by hereditary chiefs and that elected Chiefs should play a greater role in representing CSTC within these affiliated organizations. In this way, the interests of CSTC Bands would be more directly represented by their own political leaders. (Brown 1990:4-5)

Torok (1972:33-35,41) describes two factions that had developed on the Tyendinaga Indian Reserve -- long hairs (past-oriented) and short hairs (future-oriented). The Carrier-Sekani situation in many respects is similar to those factions mentioned at the band level by Torok (1972); but with some important differences, due largely to the nature of the tribalization process and DIAND policy for dealing with self-government negotiations.

I have labelled one faction of the CSTC as the "progressives" **only** because they want to reform the Tribal Council, want change to move quickly, and primarily focus on economic development as the key issue in promoting self-government, both on reserves and in joint ventures with larger industry and other bands. Faction 1 was very interested in the possible buy-out of two major logging companies in order to provide an economic base for self-government. The progressive faction consists of a few rogue band chiefs of the "go it alone" variety and their followers who have lost faith in the CSTC as a representative agency. These government chiefs want to decentralize the Tribal Council programs to member communities (for example, the Nak'azdli Band wanted to take over all aspects related to the CSTC Education Portfolio, and the Lheit-lit'enne wanted the control and management of the CSTC Natural Resource Portfolio).

> The Chiefs recommend decentralization of all CSTC programs in order to avoid the 'bigger is better' bureaucratic syndrome and in order to give all member bands and nations the program resources and experience gained by managing the various programs on behalf of all the Carrier Sekani peoples. (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991c:n.p.)

As illustrated in the quotation I used earlier, the Chiefs wanted the authority to run tribal affairs. The progressive faction's position is seen in the *Report of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council Special Chiefs Meeting, Smithers, British Columbia* (Smithers Report).

The Smithers Report was the product of a series of Chiefs' meetings held from February 26 to March 2, 1990, in Smithers. The meetings dealt with tribal restructuring, definition of appropriate structures for leadership, and future self-government. The ultimate goal of the Special Chiefs' Meetings was to ensure that the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council promote the full self-government of sovereign Yinka Dene Nations, while at the same time recognizing the need for their strong unity based on shared political interests (Brown 1990:2).

The progressive chiefs wanted to redefine the political foundation of the CSTC on the basis of a multilateral accord containing the following elements:

> a) A declaration of sovereignty of the Yinka Dene Nations, and an identification of the individual nations and the territories over which they have jurisdiction;
>
> b) A statement of the authority of traditional Yinka Dene government based on the bat'lats system;

c) A definition of areas of cooperation between the nations signatory to the Accord;

d) A definition of the political relationship between the nations and both the federal and provincial governments;

e) A statement announcing that the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council will now be known as the Federation of Yinka Dene Nations;

f) A reaffirmation among Yinka Dene Nations of their mutual respect for each other's territories and of the need to share territories with common borders; and

g) An identification of the houses (clans) of the bat'lats system as political institutions possessing inherent ownership and jurisdiction over traditional Yinka Dene territories (Brown 1990:7-9).

The new Accord was intended to reduce competition between CSTC Bands (over funding, borders, and so forth) and to clear the way for a "revival of traditional Bat'lats government." (Brown 1990:9). The following elements were informally agreed on:

1. Political leadership and jurisdiction over territories will be by sovereign Yinka Dene Band Nations. These nations will form an alliance. Each government will have its own local laws and regulations but, by mutual consent, laws and regulations will be developed to govern and facilitate collective action.

2. That the jurisdiction of traditional territories by participating government be based on the potlatch-clan system where it is currently being practiced. Where it has declined, the system will be re-defined, or new systems of clan members and hereditary chiefs established. A balance will be established in the strengths of the different clans and bands. Where the potlatch system is not practiced or known, bands will have a choice of either an elected Chief and Council as at present, or having a Chief and Council appointed by traditional clan leaders if they can be determined.

3. The role of Government Chiefs will be to facilitate the conditions of the Accord, to coordinate the transition from the present system to bat'lats government, and to maintain political alliances with outside organizations. The present government chiefs will play a major role in training and educating hereditary chiefs in CSTC policies

and programs. The deneza and tsekeza will be integrated in the political leadership at tribal council level, substituting the elected government chiefs, when they are ready to do so. The hereditary chiefs will educate current government chiefs in the traditional ways.

4. The Tribal Council will serve only as a management unit - a service agency for member bands - not as a political authority in its own right. As a service agency, its direction will come from the authority of the local First Nation Governments. It will no longer be necessary to elect Tribal and Vice-Tribal Chiefs because of the prominent role the Nations Chiefs will play in directing the Tribal Council. The position of Vice-Tribal Chief will be eliminated and the position of Tribal Chief, once an elected position, will now be made by Chiefly appointment. The title of "Tribal Chief" will also be changed to reflect the new duties of the position. Rather than have ambassador/lobbying duties performed by the Tribal Council, the hereditary chiefs and elected chiefs will play a greater role in territorial politics.

5. In order to ensure that bands can freely revert to traditional Bat'lats government, Section 74 of the Indian Act will be rejected. This will remove the obligation of Carrier-Sekani groups to elect Chiefs and Councils and will allow for the formation of governments by Band custom (Brown 1990:3-15).

In the Introduction to the *Interim Report on the Self-Determination Process* (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council:1991c:n.p.) the CSTC Self-Determination Committee outlined its approach to self-government. This Committee was headed by chiefs from the progressive faction. Their philosophy is that self-government be approached at the community level with each sovereign band nation, that an economic base is vital to self determination (through land claims and an economic development resource consortium), and that the decentralization of programs to the bands is necessary (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991c:II). The terms of reference for the Self-Determination Committee were:

1. To develop and implement a political framework agreement between all of the C.S.T.C. member nations and all other Carrier peoples.

2. To determine CSTC people's opinions and desires of and for self-government and land claims.
3. To help develop a blueprint of self-government for each member nation.
4. To outline the responsibilities of the Tribal Council as a coordinating body facilitating each nation's self-government.
5. To develop a handbook for the use of each nation to move to and implement self-government.
6. To integrate the Tribal Council with each member nation. (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991c: n.p.)

The Committee had planned to visit each member band community and distribute a questionnaire to each on-reserve household. They were to analyze the results of the surveys, determine what each individual community wanted for self-government, and develop recommendations for a structure to facilitate it. This community-based approach is in keeping with what the progressive faction believes is the best way to advance self-government negotiations. Justa Monk, Tribal Chief, also confirmed decentralization plans:

> I was mandated by the Chiefs to develop a decentralization plan for presentation to the AGA. I still feel uneasy regarding this issue but I firmly agree that programs are the responsibility of the communities. However, staff are still required to assist the Bands with negotiations, lobbying, and dealing with the governments. (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991a:7)

The second faction I will call the conservative faction. The conservative faction consists of government chiefs, Tribal Council personnel, and others who are proud of the accomplishments of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council. Their primary focus is on land claims settlement, first and foremost. They are cautious in introducing rapid change, they want to foster a collective vision for all Carrier-Sekani communities, they do not want the Tribal area fragmented, and they reject the municipilization of reserves as a form of self-government. Although the conservatives contend that programs are the responsibility of the communities, they maintain that a powerful central organization and staff are needed to assist with negotiations, particularly those related to the Canadian Constitution and Tripartite negotiations. They, too, have presented a sort of position paper called the Azah Nay Report.

The Azah Nay Report (Michell 1991), commissioned by the Tribal Council, reviewed a series of hereditary chiefs' meetings, (All Clan Gatherings), hosted between May and October 1990 (Michell 1991:6). Major recommendations from the Azah Nay meetings were:

1. Elected leaders need to be more involved with the Bah'lats system; they should be more knowledgeable of the role and behaviour of hereditary chiefs.

2. Everyone should be invited to gatherings like the Azah Nay meetings especially members of the younger generation. All staff of the CSTC, its umbrella organizations, and the bands should be encouraged to participate in the Azah Nay meetings.

3. Elected leaders need to assist Hereditary Chiefs to organize the teaching of the bat'lats system.

4. Politics or any other form of insult and slander on another person should not enter the bat'lats system.

5. All Azah Nay meetings should be recorded and on-going. (Michell 1991:7-8)

The Azah Nay Report also outlines an alternate government structure with the following underlying principles:

> a) That the bat'lats system be recognized as the highest level of government within the CSTC territory (optional to each nation).
>
> b) That one or two Senior Hereditary Chiefs from each Clan from each Nation form the highest level of Government, the House of Hereditary Chiefs within the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Area. It is on this Chamber/House that final level government authority will rest.
>
> c) That the House of Hereditary Chiefs select/elect government leaders of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council.
>
> d) That the House of Hereditary Chiefs select/elect the local government Chiefs and Councillors.
>
> e) If not already associated - each Clan be designated their own colors.
>
> f) The Hereditary Chiefs should not negotiate with outside government. This should be done by all elected leaders in consultation with the Hereditary Chiefs. That the elected government leaders continue with their role in negotiating with other government levels upon laws, policies, and regulations set out by the House of Hereditary Chiefs. As well, the selected government Chiefs continue with their dealings on program matters.
>
> g) That all authority relating to the land overlaps, hunting, fishing and trapping rest with the House of Hereditary Chiefs.
>
> h) That all the forms of respect, dignity, understanding, love sharing, support to one another, and all the other laws of the bat'lats which held communities together in the past become the driving principles of the House of Hereditary Chiefs. (Michell 1991:7-11)

Figures 4 and 5 present the self-government model proposed in the Azah Nay Report, and the place of the House of Hereditary Chiefs within the overall structure (Michell 1991:10,12).

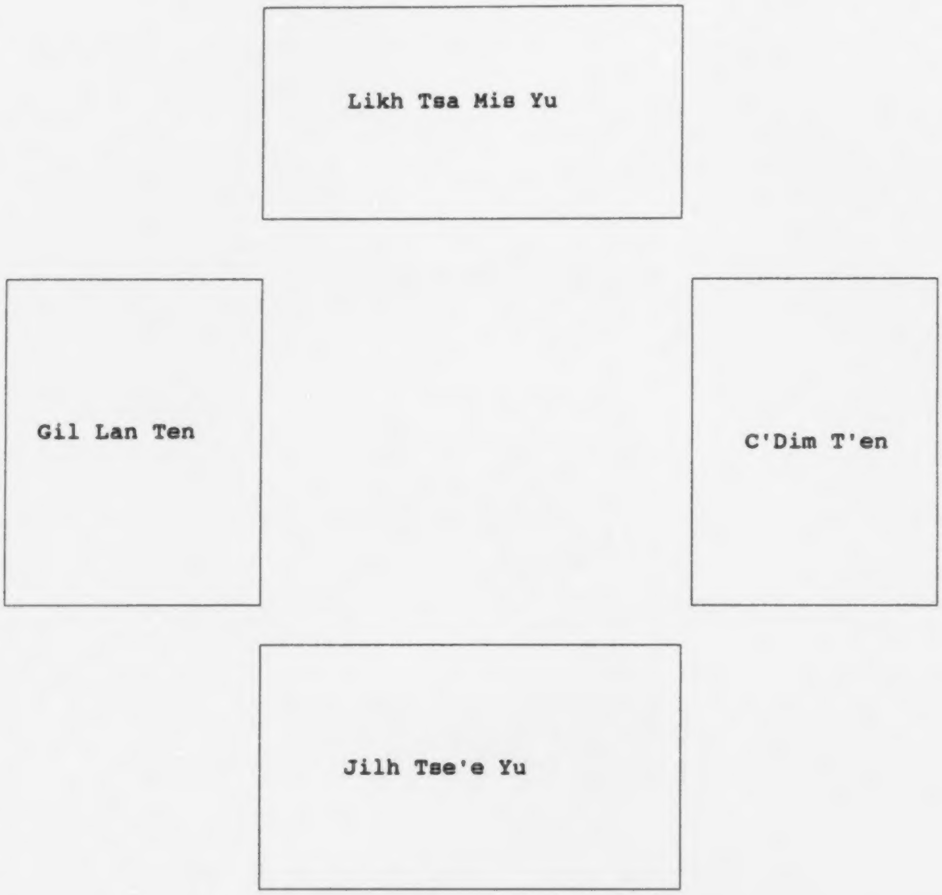
At the 10th Carrier Sekani Annual General Assembly, held in Pinchie in 1990, a number of resolutions on self-government were passed from the recommendations of the Smithers Report. The first was that the term Yinka Dene, Dakelhne, and Sekani be used where appropriate, and that the term Carrier-Sekani be used on an interim basis until all CSTC people agree on an appropriate name. Most important was that the Smithers Report was tabled. Chiefs and band councils were to make recommendations and forward them to the Tribal Chief before the end of September 1990 (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1990:11-13). Elections for Tribal Chief and Vice-Tribal Chief at this Assembly were held through community polling, rather than by those members present at the AGA.

In the summer of 1990, after their AGA, the Babine Lake Indian Band, the largest member band in population, separated from the Tribal Council. Earlier this band had been working on its own form of self-government:

> As part of the move in the direction of self-government, the Lake Babine Band has given its approval in principle to the proposed Grand Council concept as the new structure of Lake Babine government. An important part of the structure of the Grand Council is the Elders' or Hereditary Chiefs' Council . . . . By including the Hereditary Chiefs of the Balhats, the structure of the Grand Council acknowledges the importance of the governing or decision making role of the Balhats in the communities. As such it also reflects the cultural, economic, social, and spiritual reality of the Lake Babine Carrier people. It is intended that throughthe recognition of the Balhats and all the traditional customs and laws which are part of it, that the culture of the Lake Babine people will be encouraged and supported. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d. 3)

Despite its withdrawal, the Babine Band intends to remain associated with the CSTC, although the nature of this association has not yet been detailed.

**Figure 4** **Model of the House of Hereditary Chiefs as Proposed in the Azah Nay Report**

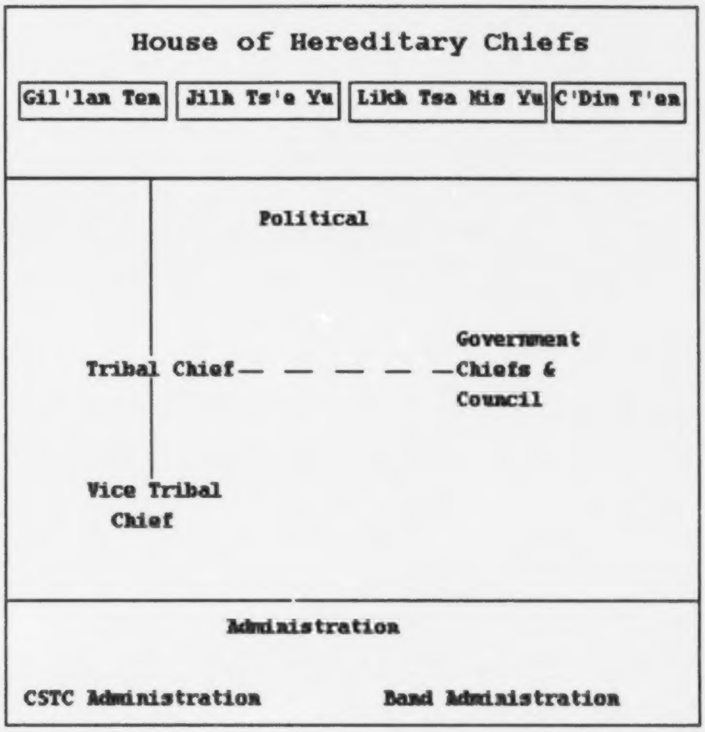

Likh Tsa Mis Yu
Gil Lan Ten
C'Dim T'en
Jilh Tse'e Yu

Protocol

Colours of Clans
Flags of the Clans
Symbols of the Clans
Animals of the Clans
Seating of the Chiefs
Head Chiefs of Clans
Head Chiefs from Nations & Clans
Place for Elected Chiefs

Adapted from Michell (1991:10)

**Figure 5 The Proposed Government Hierarchy Including the House of Hereditary Chiefs**


House of Hereditary Chiefs
Gil'lan Ten
Jilh Ts'e Yu
Likh Tsa Mis Yu
C'Din T'en
Political
Tribal Chief
Government Chiefs & Council
Vice Tribal Chief
Administration
CSTC Administration
Band Administration

Adapted from Michell (1991:2).

Justa Monk writes of the crisis that had been building between the CSTC and some member bands:

> In December 1990, concerns regarding separation, uncertainty, uneasy staff, and lack of direction [persisted]. Before this got out of hand, a planning session was held in January, 1991 between CSTC office staff and Chiefs. At this session, everyone's concerns, ideas, and recommendations were discussed. The points compiled at the end of the session were implemented and those that could not be dealt with were to go to the AGA, but for some reason situations became worse. The rumours did not stop, staff members were quitting, and the Tribal Council was falling apart at the seams. On May 13 and 14, 1991, an emergency Chiefs' meeting was called to determine the member Bands' intentions and affiliation to the Tribal Council. Each Band was asked about its intentions. The

> outcome of this meeting was a declaration regarding political issues. (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991a:7)

On May 13, 1991, the *Declaration of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council* was signed by the eleven Government Chiefs and representatives from the CSTC (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991a:1). Like the declaration proposed by the Smithers Report, and like the earlier *Carrier-Sekani Accord*, the document recognizes the sovereignty of individual nations, while binding and obligating them to the larger tribal body. The Carrier and Sekani Declaration outlines areas of mutual interest, details areas to be developed and established, specifies its goals, and lists its concerns, but provides no specifics. The last paragraph outlines time frames:

> Accordingly, we agree to work together on the above and we further agree that it will be a period of two years, and that a year to date upon signing of the declaration, another meeting will be held to begin to transfer to our new systems. At this time an agreement with the governments will be signed, that sets down the process necessary, to begin the discussions of "sovereignty and jurisdiction."
>
> Furthermore we affirm the mandate of the Self-Determination Committee as presented to the meeting of the Carrier and Sekani Chiefs . . . . (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1991c:5)

At the 11th Annual General Assembly held in Burns Lake, the Smithers Report was put on the table for discussion as well as the newly introduced Azah Nay Report. At this Assembly, titled *Self-Determination through Self-Government*, a number of issues were raised about both the Smithers and Azah Nay reports. Some people at the Assembly saw them as complementary; in their broader principles both called for a return to a traditional system that recognized the power of the elders and hereditary chiefs, and both gave individual communities options and a great deal of latitude on self-government direction. Some people thought that one would make a good transitional model while the other provides the actual model and so forth. Others at the Assembly saw the two reports as diametrically opposed. The Smithers Report recommended:

1. Government Chiefs select a Tribal Chief,
2. Decentralization of power and programs to the band level,
3. Elimination of the Vice-Tribal Chief.

The Azah Nay Report recommended:

1. The hereditary chiefs appoint or select government chiefs and CSTC positions,
2. Centralization of power in the Tribal Council,
3. Retention of the Vice-Tribal Chief.

The 11th Annual General Assembly tabled all portfolio reports. Few people attended this assembly, but one important resolution was passed:

> That the Smithers Report of March 1990 be adopted: AND FURTHER THAT the Self Determination Committee along with one Elder from each community be appointed to review the Smithers Report and the Azah Report; AND FURTHER THAT Justa Monk stays on as Tribal Chief in the interim until an appointment is made at a Special Assembly in the fall of 1991. (Carrier Sekani Tribal Council 1991d:n.p.)

According to a local newspaper, the *Caledonia Courier*, Emma Williams, Vice-Tribal Chief, stated in a press release that:

> "As a result of the CSTC 11th Annual General Assembly (AGA) held in Burns Lake, B.C., the Smithers Report of March 1990 was pushed to be adopted by two political leaders," Williams stated . . . . "Not all of the 12 Bands were represented at the AGA. I caution the members of the Carrier-Sekani to review the Smithers Report very

> carefully and advise them to voice their concerns at the Special Assembly to be held in the fall of 1991."

The paper goes on to say that:

> In the press release, Williams expressed fears that the AGA could be conducted on a social and public information basis rather than as a business meeting basis. She also pointed out her dislike of the procedures of the tribal chief appointed by the current government chiefs.
>
> "No resolutions or elections will be dealt with and the CSTC reports will simply be distributed as public information rather than being formally adopted," Williams' release stated. "With these changes, there is no accountability and communication to the grassroots members of the CSTC." (Caledonia Courier, July 31,1991)

An August 21, 1991, article summarized the purpose of the Special Assembly as follows:

> The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) will be holding a special assembly in Nak'azdli to make changes to the organizations constitution and to solicit direction for next year.
>
> Tribal Chief Justa Monk, interviewed from his office in Prince George Wednesday, said the meeting, . . . will concentrate on two reports which offer conflicting visions for the future organizational make-up of the CSTC.
>
> "The Smithers report recommended, among other things, the replacement of the Vice-Tribal Chief position with an 'Ambassador' or 'Speaker'," Monk said. "Due to uncertainty and lack of communication I want to clarify the Smithers Report."
>
> The Smithers Report, from the elected governing chiefs of the CSTC, recommends going back to the traditional clan system of government and is contested by another report from the hereditary chiefs.
>
> "I will be advising the membership to be careful to consider the younger generation," Monk said. "It will be for them that we are making these changes and if they do not understand the traditional Potlatch System then someone will have to stand up to speak for them."
>
> Monk will also be looking for direction from the membership for the next year. "We want to know what the membership feels should be the kinds of issues we should

> be concentrating on," Monk said . . . . (The Caledonia Courier, August 21, 1991)

Sometime in July 1991, the mandate of the Self-Determination Committee was revoked and plans to implement the self-determination surveys were cancelled (although some Chiefs still planned to have their villages surveyed anyway).

The Special Assembly in Nak'azdli in September of 1991 dealt with the uncertainty and division that everyone hoped could be cleared up by the end of that Assembly. Elders, Band members, and Chiefs discussed a whole range of options available to them: the Azah Nay Report, the Smithers Report, the possibility of rewriting the CSTC constitution, decentralization, and so forth.

Opinions were diverse: some people said the Smithers Report should be thrown out entirely; others were not interested in government based on the potlatch; some proposed melding the two reports; and others discussed Tribal Council and band jurisdiction. Many Government chiefs spoke in support of tribal level government, maintaining that they were too busy running reserve programs and did not want additional responsibility. Many elders pointed out that it was the struggle for money that created the problems between bands and the CSTC. Still others pointed out that the idea of sovereign band level nations was a form of divide and conquer. The only consensus of the assembly seemed to be the need for unity, respect, commitment, and compromise.

On the second day of the Assembly the Tribal Chief announced that the Fort George Band was withdrawing from the

Tribal Council. Although Chief Peter Quaw had a long-standing policy of remaining separate from the Tribal Council on many issues, and had developed his own plan for self-government on reserve through an elders' council, this was his first formal announcement of a permanent departure. Although he has separated, he intends to proceed with many of the objectives outlined by the Self-Determination Committee; and is willing to work independently with other bands who are interested.

Some resolutions were passed at the Special Assembly. Voting was conducted by those present at the Assembly, by representative village. Justa Monk will remain Tribal Chief for another two years.

## Summary

Despite consultation among government chiefs, grass root members, and elders and hereditary chiefs; despite many assemblies and meetings; and despite reports, commissions, and studies, the lack of direction for self-government persists. This situation is due, in a large part, to the history of tribalization; and the government's negotiations process, which has created, at polar extremes, two strong factions and a power base to be fought over. The planned addition of an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council at the tribal level will do little to resolve underlying structural conflicts. Plans to return to traditional values, customs, and practices found in the potlatch has also added to the confusion. In the next chapter, I have outlined other structural problems, stemming from the nature of traditional organization and culture change, that continue to hamper Carrier-Sekani self-government modelling.

# Chapter 3 Problems of Definition and Sources of Opposition in Regional Model Formulation

In the preceding chapter, I outlined two different levels of organization under the band system -- band level and tribal council level, and showed that there were two divergent opinions on the future organization of self-government. I pointed out that some Band Chiefs were putting forward sovereign Yinka Dene Nations (which will have jurisdiction over particular territories) as the proper authority in matters of government. I also pointed out that proponents of the Tribal Council are forwarding a plan whereby hereditary chiefs will form the highest level of Carrier Government -- the House of Hereditary Chiefs. I also showed that such proposals, combined with the need to define and form self-government, have increased internal conflict at the political level. The Carrier and Sekani are struggling not only with the appropriate level for their government, but also with other problems related to grouphood and nationhood.

This chapter examines lines of opposition in regional model formulation. It investigates the structural problems inherent in attempting to reconcile Euro-Canadian political structures and ideology with Carrier and Sekani institutions. It also describes grass root's opposition to the proposals put forth by government leaders. As Long (1990:771) points out:

> . . . in redesigning their political institutions not only must Indian leaders fully comprehend the problems they are trying to surmount. They must also be cognizant of the ideological parameters within which they must operate during the process.

## The Problem of Sovereign Statehood

Boldt and Long (1985:341) write that misguided, rather than manipulative, contemporary native leaders:

> As part of their political-legal justification for sovereignty and to convince the Canadian government and the international community that their claim to sovereignty is legitimate, . . . are reconstructing and reinterpreting their tribal history and traditional culture to conform to the essential political and legal paradigms and symbols contained in the European-western concept of sovereign statehood. They are creating the fiction that Indian societies, prior to European contact, had hierarchically structured governments that exercised authority through a ruling entity and that were in possession of lands clearly defined by political and territorial boundaries.

These "unsupportable and selective assumptions" actually contradict the images Indians hold of traditional organization and decision-making (Boldt and Long 1985:341). European-western models of elected democratic governments, with bureaucratic administrative structures and exercise of authority, run counter to basic native models and philosophy; they are "alien authority structures," which constitute a "complete break with traditional indigenous principles" (Boldt and Long 1985:342).

Boldt and Long (1985:335-341) point out that European-western models of sovereign statehood evolved from Feudal thought with the following assumptions: that authority must be placed somewhere, that hierarchical and authoritarian structures are natural and necessary (with control vested in a ruling body), and that the "rulers and the ruled" operate within a geographical space marked with fixed territorial boundaries.

Sovereign statehood runs counter to Indian ideology and organization. Most Native societies of North America were communally based and egalitarian. Decisions were reached by consensus. Individual self-interest was based on sharing; and there was respect for personal autonomy, and a preference for impersonal controls and behaviours. In contrast European-western societies are individually based, emphasize rampant self-interest, and are formed on a social contract. State societies have authoritarian structures and formal sanctions (Boldt and Long 1985:334-336).

> [In] tribal Indian society authority and order rested on custom and the directly spoken consensus of the community. Indian nations had no need for statehood and the condition of hierarchical authority that statehood implies. Their community performed all of the necessary political functions: it kept peace, preserved individual life, and protected its members from injustice, abuse, and arbitrary actions by any of their number. (Boldt and Long 1985:340)

According to Boldt and Long (1988:337):

> The political and social experiences that would allow Indians to conceive of authority in European-western terms simply did not exist, nor can sovereign authority be reconciled with the traditional beliefs and values that they want to retain.

In advancing sovereign statehood, Native leaders are losing the fundamental distinction "between traditional Indian and European political and cultural values" (Boldt and Long 1985:342). By advancing sovereignty and rewriting history, Indian leaders are threatening the "very values they seek to protect" (Bold and Long 1985:335). Leaders may be actually "playing into the hands of the Canadian government's long-standing policy of assimilation" (Boldt and Long 1985:342).

Therefore, an inherent contradiction exists in the Native quest for sovereign identity (Boldt and Long 1985:342).

As I pointed out in Chapter 1, the Carrier are related to the Northern Athapaskans, whose organization is believed to have been based on some sort of loose system of hunting bands (although there are different interpretations on the exact nature of this organization -- cf. Ives 1990; Hudson 1983; Steward 1955; Grossman 1965; Kobrinsky 1981; Goldman 1940).

It is suggested by Steward (1941a:496) that for the egalitarian Carrier, "all members of the village or band probably had the right of using the group's fishing stations and hunting areas."

It is commonly believed that the rank-potlatch system was diffused from Coastal groups to the Babine and Bulkley River Carrier during the early years of the fur trade. The Babine and Bulkley River groups in turn transmitted it to eastern subtribes. At this time, intermarriage facilitated a shift to matrilineal clans and the adoption of the rank-potlatch complex (Goldman 1941:408-410).

Nineteenth century Carrier clan organization distinguished between nobles and commoners (Morice (1892:112). The deneza or nobles were represented within each descent group (the property owning group), and were entitled to decide collectively upon clan affairs such as rights to fishing lakes and streams within clan territories (Hudson 1983:70, Jenness 1943:488). Clan "deneza- ship", theoretically, was inherited through the matriline; and the usual successor to a title was sister's son

(Morice 1892:112). The phratry system -- clans expressed in different villages -- cross-cut local residential groups.

Jenness (1943:481) describes the traditional organization of the most Tsimshianized Carrier group:

> . . . the Bulkley Indians, like a many-tentacled cephalopod, had wandering feelers gathering sustenance that enriched the community's life. Yet there was no central nervous system to coordinate the movements of the feelers and to assimilate or reject their booty, no ruling chief or established council to control the actions of the different families and govern their relations with the outside world. Like other Carrier subtribes, the Bulkley natives were divided into a number of fraternities or phratries, each intimately associated with the others, yet politically independent.

While the phratries lived together at fishing locations for part of the year, participated together in ceremonies, and at times united for defense, they all owned separate hunting territories where they went during the winter (Jenness 1943:481).

> [Phratries] associated at will with foreign peoples even when these might be hostile to others of their countrymen. Since there was no regulation of foreign intercourse and trade and no hindrance to marriage outside the community, foreign ideas and foreign customs could take root in one family or phratry without permeating others. It was only the constant association, the ties of kinship and marriage, the uniform dialect, and the pressure of common interests that counteracted the strong centrifugal tendencies and knitted the phratries into a definite, though headless, unit justifying the name subtribe. (Jenness 1943:481-482)

So the Carrier, both before and after the diffusion of the Northwest coast complex, were not operating at a state level.

Boldt and Long (1985:340-341) maintain that Natives also lacked well-delineated territorial boundaries; and although conflicts resulted from hunting transgressions, these disputes were over access to game and not disputes over the territory itself.

Harmon (1922:255), an early fur trader, writes of Carrier land ownership:

> People had an extent of country they considered to be their own in which to hunt and fish. And they could not go on another's territory without purchasing the privilege of those who claim the land. Mountains and rivers serve as boundaries and they are not often broken over.

Jenness (1932:366) points out that while Bulkley territories were subdivided among phratries and clans, and supervised by chiefs or stewards who held titles, final ownership rested with the entire phratry. It was poaching or encroaching on resource areas that "was a very serious offense certain to cause strife and bloodshed . . ." (Jenness 1932:366). But as Kobrinsky (1977:73) notes:

> There is little question that the idea of exclusive territories was foreign to the Athapaskan root of Carrier tradition . . . that it was acquired from their coastal neighbours as part of the phratry system.

Boldt and Long (1985:340) state that the current emphasis on land claims and the right to reserve lands also "represents a concession to European-western political-legal influence."

> Tribes existed as spiritual associations that transcended narrow issues of territory. This basis for nationhood was their community, not a fixed territory or geographically defined citizenship. (Boldt and Long 1985:340)

Boldt and Long (1985:345-346) claim that the Canadian Government does not necessarily object to the principle of self-government, but is not willing to concede to Indian claims of sovereign statehood. They also point out that Native economic status is incompatible with sovereign statehood, even though it is not incompatible with a claim to nationhood.

> Autonomous nationhood, unlike sovereign statehood, would allow Indians to preserve traditional beliefs, values, customs, and institutions and to integrate these with emergent group interests. (Boldt and Long 1985:346)

Boldt and Long claim that the ambiguity surrounding the term "sovereignty" has averted factionalism within "Indian society, as each group is free to infer its preferred meanings and objectives" (Boldt and Long 1985:334). However, in the Carrier case, having to establish the parameters of self-government has antagonized members because meanings, objectives, and political units must be defined and within constraints. The need for clearly defined terms also applies to nationhood.

## The Problem of Nationhood

As I pointed out earlier, the Carrier have been grouped as Carrier only because they share a common language. The Carrier, traditionally, had no common name for themselves -- only names for subtribes that were independent. Subtribes were not unified political entities nor were they corporate kinship groupings (Jenness 1932:363).

> In their localized existences as units in a given band, phratries were primary social groups controlling the apportioning of hunting territories, acting as a unit in matters of aggression, cooperating in ceremonial endeavors, and regulating marriage through the rule of exogamy . . . .
>
> The term "tribe" which is often applied to groupings like the Carrier, Chilcotin and Sekani, and to subgroups like Western Carrier and Finlay River Sekani with them, may be better avoided among the Western Denes because the territory holdings and politically sovereign units connoted by the term did not exist at the level of the

> mentioned groupings. On the other hand, the bands that tended to cohere economically and socially with periodic assemblages do not have the unified organization with political leadership fixed, as in an authoritative chief, so that the term "tribe" does not seem fully apt for them either. The agents of white civilization, however, eagerly labelled groups on various levels as tribes, ascribed chiefs to them, and endowed them with political power organization and land control which did not really exist for it was easier to deal with native groups as if they were sovereign tribal units. In view of these difficulties with "tribe", and also with the word "nation" sometimes used for larger groupings, the word "people" has been used since it has little connotation of necessary political coherency and formal organization. (Arima 1976:29-30)

At the Nak'azdli Special Assembly, in September 1991, one elder spoke out on the difficulty in terminology and concepts being used to describe Carrier groupings. He commented that he did not think that the word "band" or "nation" should be used to describe band level government (Tl'azt'en Nation or Lheit-li Nation) because it "is divide and conquer and working into the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs." He stated that, "Each band isn't a independent nation because we're all related." The word tribe, to him, was appropriate because, "The Carrier are a tribal people with one nation and one language." Although the "Carrier are a Nation, they are not a complete nation because some of the Carrier belong to the Chilcotin -- to the Caribou Tribal Council." In his opinion, "That's two different nations at once and we're divided." He spoke of the Sekani people who are different because:

> They have their own language, their own name, they don't potlatch, they don't have clans, they have different ways and different laws. Yet they're not a complete nation either because half of the Sekani belong to the Kaska Dene. We are not the Yinka Dene we are the Carrier and Sekani Nations.

In his opinion, to form one nation with two tribes is "putting the cart before the horse."

As I pointed out earlier, others reject the notion of the larger nation because it has no historical basis. To them "people of a village" is the appropriate political nation.

Boldt and Long (1985:344) point out that "social scientists have defined a nation as 'a social group which shares a common ideology, common institutions and customs and a sense of homogeneity.'" Nationhood is also "'a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it in the subconscious convictions of its members, from all other people.'" National consciousness is an "aversion to being ruled by those deemed aliens." A 'nation' is a nation "based on traditional cultural and linguistic communities." Therefore, Indian tribes meet the social science criteria of nationhood (Boldt and Long 1985:344).

Arima (1976:34-35) applies the social scientific definition of nationhood to the Carrier, Sekani, and Chilcotin:

> Often [these groups] are spoken of as "tribes," but these were not socio-politically organized units as the concept of "tribe" implies or entails. (Arima 1976:31)
>
> To speak of "Carrier nationality" or "Carrier nation" is legitimate, however, only if it is kept in mind that political integration and autonomy in a state-like manner did not exist at this level of categorization . . . . (Arima 1976:34)
>
> This sentiment of political sovereignty in the tribal framework might be considered, for the sake of exposition, to involve a feeling of separate distinctiveness from other groups, at whatever degree of size and political organization . . . . (Arima 1976:88)

Carrier nationhood is suggested by the following statements:

> We have more in common than our differences. We all follow our mother's clan. We all belong to clans and we can have pride in that.
>
> We all come together at potlatch. We're all alike through our potlatch.

Yet, these types of statements do not include the Sekani; nor do these sentiments take into account groups in the southern end of Carrier region, who interacted with the bilateral Bella Coola, who were not organized into matrilineal clans although they had crests and potlatched (Goldman 1940:338).

Other Carrier groups, like the Lheit-lit'enne, may or may not have had clans due to their locations in the southern part of the region (Goldman 1941:408). Morice (n.d.:38) mentions the large number of Sekanis at Fort George, and Duff (1951:31) wrote of the Lheit-lit'enne that:

> The Prince George subtribe seems to have some traces of phratry organization for the purposes of feasting, etc., but according to the Fort Fraser informant, who lived among them for eight years after 1907, it has been almost completely forgotten. The division of hunting and trapping grounds was never affected; any family of the subtribe being allowed to use its rich and extensive territories.

My field research indicates that many Lheit-lit'enne have origins traceable to the Sekani people. Many Fort George Band members do not know, therefore, which clans they belong to. Those that do are often from other Carrier subtribes that have married in. The Lheit-lit'enne do not potlatch today.

The non-uniformity in potlatch practices and the clan system has implications for government modelling:

> The Sekanis must be included if they are a part of us, however, they do not practice nor have any knowledge of Bat'lats being practiced by their people ever. Therefore, the Bat'lats system when properly defined, should be

> reviewed by them; and their decisions respected when made. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5)

At the Special Assembly an official representative from the Ingenika Band expressed a Sekani view on self-government, which contains a different idea of the nation:

> We speak of this CSTC. I really believe CSTC should be kept in. I believe we should continue what we started from the beginning with CSTC. We need a decision. I for one, and my chief, want CSTC to stay on. We respect your way and we are watching and then once the matter is settled, we will state our position. Many times we create our own divisions. There is Indianess in us no matter how we look at it. We were born Indian, honest, considerate, sharing people.

One chief threw out the suggestion that, "The Sekani are a part of us, and before we make any changes we should consult them and work as true nations." He went on to say that perhaps "the Sekanis should have a Tribal Chief, too."

Cornell (1988:40) says tribalization for groups in the United States involved a triple transformation: it effected the organization of groups, it effected the conceptualization of grouphood, and it effected the relations between the two. Cornell maintains that structures of authority and decision-making which rested with the community became "institutionally separate from the structures of kinship and custom and modes of thought which had 'governed' Indian peoples" (Cornell 1988:41). This separation created a situation in which, according to Cornell, there were diverse interpretations of the meaning for tribe: some rooted in aboriginal modes of thought, structures, and symbols; some anchored in historical circumstances; some in subjective products of White-Indian interaction; and others little more than legal definitions (Cornell 1988:41-42).

> [Originally] autonomous political units were bound together in the conceptual framework of a single people. Now the roles are reversed: diverse concepts of peoplehood are bound together in a single, political framework. The conceptual community, . . . has been subordinated to the political community - its form not derived from the Indian past but from the White - which now dominates Indian relationships with the larger society. (Cornell 1988:42)

Yet, "monistic political structures may hide fragmented conceptual ones" (Cornell 1988:43). Further, the success of tribalization depended

> in part on a degree of group identification and commitment which in some cases never existed. Furthermore, by formalizing and advancing consolidation, it antagonized subtribal constituencies whose autonomy and power were at stake. (Cornell 1988:38)

While the Yinka Dene Federation may be termed a nation under the social scientific definition of the term, it is a heterogeneous nation rather than a homogeneous one. Further, the definitions of "tribe" and "nation" apply to the village level as well. Government chiefs base their policies for self-government on the rationale of "people of a village" when claiming sovereign statehood or nationhood. The Tribal Council primarily operates on the ideological level of the regional Carrier Nation or the Carrier-Sekani Nation. These chosen levels of political organization show a fragmented version of tribe. They are both concessions to European-western influence.

Smith (1989:341) discusses the preconditions for emerging nations. He points out that the nation may be seen as an abstraction, as something elites have constructed to serve partisan ends. Against this view, he contrasts the reality of the nation, which has a real, tangible base; the sentiments of its members. He concludes that emerging nations "must be regarded as both a construct and a real process" (Smith 1989:316). While Carrier politicians are having to construct nations, they are appealing to an emerging and very real consciousness based on shared experience, culture, and symbols.

The Smithers Report suggested that for a new government, a name change was in order (from the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council to the Federation of Yinka Dene Nations); and the Tribal Council has been casually referring to its Carrier and Sekani members as Yinka Dene for about five years. The CSTC was faced with the problem of finding a "traditional" label for this diverse and new nation. But the term Yinka Dene is a political and ideological construct applied to the formerly separate Carrier and Sekani groupings, in order to foster unity and a collective vision. For the most part, grass root members have rejected the term and leaders have failed to educate members on the reasons for the construct.

Many people reject the term Yinka Dene because they say that it originally applied only to native people (perhaps) around Fort St. James and Burns Lake, and not to the Carrier and Sekani peoples (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:3). Others maintain Yinka Dene -- "people of the earth," means "people floating on top of the earth" rather than "people at one with the earth." Many elders say that the term includes all people of the world (including Natives, Chinese, Blacks, Whites, etc.).

As well as being a construct for two formerly separate peoples, an additional problem stems from the fact that the term is from the Babine dialect. While Yinka Dene refers to the Babines "and the entire family to which they belong" and is translated by Morice to mean "people of the universe" (Morice n.d.:7), it was not used by other Carrier dialect groups; and is therefore ambiguous in its meaning. Some individuals resent using a term specific to the Babines and not from their own dialects.

Some elders would prefer that the name Dakelhne be used in place of Yinka Dene because this is the only term that was commonly used to describe "Indian people," both the Carrier and Sekani. The term Dakelhne is commonly used to express national sentiment. Many people say that Carrier-Sekani is enough. "Keep the name as simple as that." "We are separate peoples."

Older elders believe that in addition to English, Carrier government and business should be conducted in the traditional languages.

> When we conducted business long ago, it was All in Carrier or Sekani Languages. English is a second language to us, and we are failing because we are trying to master a foreign language, and at the same time giving our secrets away. We must go back to doing business in our language; so we know exactly what we are saying. . . . This will strengthen the language too. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:6)

There are three major divisions of Carrier (really overlapping dialect chains) to deal with as well as the Sekani language. Which one would be used as the official language, and how would the decision be made? Further, one elder who is fluent in Carrier commented that he "only knows swear words." In an attempt to assist the younger generation he suggested that business be conducted in English.

As well as a lack of uniform dialects and language, diverse ideas concerning nationhood, and a lack of agreement on the appropriate level of government, other specific problems result from the lack of a uniform culture and from culture change arising from historical circumstances.

Long (1990:769-770) uses religion as a criterion to measure whether or not a Native group is assimilated. He argues that Plains reserves are not totally assimilated because they reject the notion of secularized politics. Torok (1972:40) points out that in some Iroquoian communities the Handsome Lake religion serves a function -- to integrate "various aspects of conservative culture and social structure."

Jenness (1943) outlines what he believed were the Carrier's early religious beliefs. The Carrier believed all living creatures had supernatural powers that could be used by human beings. Carrier hunters actively sought a bird or animal that could be summoned when necessary. Medicine power had a dual nature -- it could be benevolent or malevolent. In addition to the guardian spirit complex, the Carrier had a culture hero, and stories of supernatural monsters that once lived on earth. "High gods had no place in this early religion" (Jenness 1929:22).

Jenness (1943:557-558) reported, in the 1940s, that the Bulkley River Carrier were struggling to reconcile their old religion to the new one.

> To most of the Bulkley natives Christianity (and today they all adhere to the Roman Catholic Church) has not abolished the supernatural world of their forefathers, but merely added a second one that has increased life's complexity because its teachers and missionaries condemn the old principality and demand undivided allegiance to the new. Some of the elder Indians, therefore, try to compromise. Christianity, they say, has introduced nothing that is radically new. (Jenness 1943:557)

Some elders, recognizing that Carrier society was not secularized in the past, want self-government to contain aspects of spirituality. As I point out in the quotation by Jenness, and in the following statement, syncretism is the order of the day:

> Everything must be done in line with the Creator, that the circle of life revolves around the Creator and must be acknowledged at all times, must also remember that as Aboriginal people, we already believed in one Creator. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:9)

Some factions want the new government to be consistent with Biblical teachings. Still older elders do not want to reinstitute the potlatch at all because "the priests outlawed it a long time ago." Many people feel that rivalrous aspects of "potlatchery" promoted the use of malevolent medicine powers, and the potlatch should not be used at all -- for anything.

Ogden mentions in his journal that the Indians were eager to obtain rum for potlatching (Morice 1978:197), and some elders remember potlatching as being associated with alcohol excess. To them, reinstating the potlatch would be tantamount to encouraging alcohol abuse. In its extreme form some people believe, due to the influence of Catholicism, that leaders (although it was not clear if they meant government or hereditary chiefs) were chosen by God; and therefore are infallible, "To be respected, not challenged."

Long (1990:769-770) describes changes that have occurred in Plains Indian life:

> The secularization of politics marks a radical departure from traditional plains Indian belief systems where spiritualism was intertwined with all tribal activities, including the governing process. Traditional Indian philosophies defined humanity in terms of spiritual unity. This definition was based on a cosmocentric conception that stressed the interrelatedness of all life and the need for harmony among all the parts. To exclude the spiritual dimension from the decision-making process in traditional society would be inconceivable. Traditional Indian spiritualism, therefore, stands in direct contrast to the secular individualism of Western democratic institutions that underpin *Indian Act* government.

Most Carrier government leaders have a secular approach to politics; and are constantly reminded by the elders of the need to include God, the Creator, in government. As Long (1990:770) points out for contemporary Plains groups, traditional spiritualism is not all pervasive; but "religion remains an integral part of the political process." In Carrier society, like Plains society, spiritual blessings are given by elders (who have not accepted political secularization).

While Torok (1972:40) and Cornell (1988:37) mention the formation of two political factions around religion (the pagans versus Christians) this factionalism is not found in an extreme form among the Carrier. Although a few "purists" maintain that any new government system should be based on traditional Indian practices, not on Catholicism; which was part of the system of colonial oppression and forced culture change. The issue with the Carrier and Sekani is not really which form of religion should be used, for there is a great deal of respect for individual beliefs; but in an assurance that religion be included in government. Yet there is a remarkable contradiction. Carrier elders want religion to be included in the new government structure but do not want its form institutionalized. As one person commented:

> We must remember that our philosophy is consistent with the Bible, therefore [we] should not let any organization dominate and dictate our Spiritual beliefs, further that the young generation must be made aware of this. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:10)

## The Problem of Culture Change and Role Translation

Problems in modelling government are created when Carrier leaders attempt, in the manner pointed out by Boldt and Long (1985), to translate traditional institutions in terms of those found in state society. Carrier leaders are asking elders what potlatch business entailed, and what leaders' roles and responsibilities were in the traditional form of government. In their search for distinctive political units, they want to know "how the deneza ruled."

Carrier elders insist that traditionally the bat'lats and government were distinct. One part dealt with internal matters such as clan business (in which deneza ruled), while external matters such as "boundary overlap disputes" and the day to day "governing of a nation" were handled by a different political body.

> You confuse Bat'lats and Indian government of long ago. Bat'lats deals with the internal matters of the people and A'zahs ruled this system. However all external matters . . . [were] done by a different political body. These two never mixed their affairs in the past, and you must ensure

> that it does not become mixed up now. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5)

While secularized politics and a two-body system seem appropriate in the context of the recent past, it seems inconsistent with older indigenous Carrier and Sekani organizations.

Culture change has caused problems in defining the single traditional political system. For example, Harmon (1922:253) provides an early account of the role of Carrier leaders:

> The Carriers have little that can be denominated civil government, in regulation of their concerns. There are some persons among them, who are called Mi-u-ties or Chiefs, and for whom they appear to have little more respect than for the others; but these chiefs have not much authority or influence over the rest of the community. Any one is *dubbed* a Mi-u-ty, who is able and willing, occasionally, to provide a feast, for the people of his village.

Goldman (1941:398) states that among the Alkatcho Carrier, a méotih was a village chief, a noble, who was responsible for adjusting hunting and fishing disputes, and for organizing potlatches. This position was generally inherited through primogeniture.

It is difficult to know whether or not this type of village leadership was present prior to the fur trade, or whether it was a product of the fur trade. Vanstone claims that among Athapaskans hereditary leadership "occurred rarely, and might go from father to son if the latter possessed the right qualities" (Vanstone 1974:49). The ability to give potlatches played a role in leadership (Vanstone 1974:49).

Moodih is translated in the *Central Carrier Dictionary* (Walker 1974:148,299) as meaning "the boss." Kobrinsky (1973:152) believes that the phratries grew around prominent people, who probably corresponded to traditional Athapaskan hunting leaders; "the boss" or "big man", as mentioned by Helm and Leacock (1971:367) and Honnigman (1946:65). The translation of moodih is problematic because the Carrier also refer to deneza as "the boss" of a particular territory.

Morice (1892:119) discusses a Carrier notable, a keyohwhuduchun ("stick or post of the village"), which he speculates is a position of extraneous origin -- somehow based on the Tsimshian custom of erecting commemorative columns. Yet, the term is Carrier. Hudson writes that

> the term keyoh means, at various times, my home, my trapline, my land or country, and the 'place where I get my living from the land.' (Hudson 1983:158)

The *Central Carrier Dictionary* translates the term keyoh to mean town, country, where one usually traps, (Walker 1974:117), whuniz to mean in the middle (Walker 1974:318), and duchun to mean tree (Walker 1974:335). Thus, the term keyohwhuduchun might imply a relationship with the land as well as a position within the village.

Steward, however, provides more detail about the position of keyohwhuduchun, which may explain the dual power structure referred to by the elders.

> The village chief, *köyohodachum* ("village big tree"), had the duties of exhorting people to provide for their own needs, of arbitrating disputes over hunting boundaries

> (probably band boundaries regarding game), and settling disagreements among villages. This position was strongly patrilineal, passing to the chief's brother or son or to someone chosen by the retiring chief for his ability. Later it tended to be elective, and in some cases the chief was appointed by government officials or Catholic missionaries.
>
> A title of nobility might also be possessed by a village chief, but the two positions were separate. Thus, Kwah at Fort St. James was *köyohodachum* and held the highest potlatch title, *agetas*. But the title *agetas* was passed on to Yuwani, his nephew (probably his sister's son, which accords with the theory of descent), while the village chieftainship was taken over by Prince, his own son. In part, this latter succession reflected or at least accorded with white interests, for the government officials designated Kwah as "king" and his son, of whom they approved, as "Prince". (Steward 1961:735-736)

Steward implies, but does not explicitly state, that the position of keyohwhuduchun was a precontact phenomenon.

The Carrier also use the terms daiyeecho and daieeyaz (big chief and little chief), to describe some of their traditional leaders. Hudson (1983:112-116) and Mulhall (1986:56,75,78) describe in some detail the effects that the fur traders, the Catholic church, and the Department of Indian Affairs had on Carrier socio-political structures. Results of the above influences include the introduction of trading chiefs and church chiefs. Daiyeecho and daieeyaz positions, at least at Fort St. James, were titles created to serve white, and individual Native, interests.

Torok (1972:39) mentions a type of stress that was associated with the co-existence in time of descent-based (lineage and clan) and territorial-based (village) socio-political structures. Goldman (1941:412) mentions that the upper Carrier version of the Gitksan phratries was adapted at Alkatcho to an uncongenial type of social organization. Kobrinsky (1981:6,14) proposes for the Carrier the opposition of two systems -- the sept system, "people of" a certain place, and the clan-matrilineal descent system. Steward (1961:742) remarks on the potential for conflict for the Northern Carrier case.

> The northern Carrier were seemingly involved in a conflict that was never wholly resolved. Village chieftainship was a separable role from potlatch nobility, although the same man might hold both.

When I asked some people about the two distinct political structures, I was told that it was not a distinction between hereditary chiefs and village chiefs (like those outlined by Steward), but a system of "titled people" and "leaders." Leaders were those individuals who "were good at something," and gave directions to others when on the trapline and when hunting. Hereditary chiefs were "in the potlatch," while "leaders" were "on the land."

While contemporary government chiefs look for the traditional Indian governing system under the deneza potlatch system, clearly Carrier leadership evolved through a process that separated the matrilineal deneza from other types of leadership roles. As the people say:

> . . . either we talk about Bat'lats, or Indian Government of the old way with the Diyi-Cho Nay. . . We need to be clear in what we say and do at all times (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5).
>
> Must be not only clear, but consistent in what it says about Bat'lats, about Government, and about Band Customs way of operating. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:4)
>
> Daiyeecho and keyohweduchun were separate political arms. Denezah and dzekezah dealt with internal potlatch matters

> like payback of funeral expenses, feast, feeding the people.
>
> Daiyee -- name given to Indian leaders by the Traders and missionaries. It is a Chinook word. Deneza were the clan leaders. Dunezacho were the great leaders.

The rank-potlatch system was also impacted as traders, missionaries, and the federal government first appointed leaders; and then instituted the band system of government with democratically elected leaders (with authority to make decisions based on the principle of majority rule). Culture change has created problems in talking about, and defining, the traditional structure.

Dennis and Kanakos (n.d.2) discuss the dual nature of the current decision-making process at Lake Babine:

> Since the imposition of the Indian Act on the Lake Babine Carrier, two systems of decision making, or government, have been operating in the communities. One system of government exists pursuant to the Indian Act and is the Band Council. The other system of decision making exists through the Laws of our society as expressed and confirmed in the Balhats. Despite the limitations and restrictions placed on both of the governing systems, they continue to function in the Lake Babine communities.

Cornell (1988:39) discusses an:

> . . . uneasy coexistence of dual power structures, one embedded in traditional social organization and custom, the other an elected government formally recognized by BIA. These structures may operate in more or less distinct spheres of influence, as in the Navaho case where, for a time at least, traditional forms of authority persisted in the daily affairs of local residence communities, while the tribal council operated largely in the expanding sphere of tribal-wide concerns and relations with the larger society. Alternatively the two structures may compete directly for power and influence . . . . (Cornell 1988:39; Emphasis is mine)

As well as the problems created by village level and regional level of government modelling, Carrier elders say that elected systems and traditional systems should be kept separate:

> Bat'lats and political Government are two separate issues never to be mixed. [Reject Bat'lats government] because Bat'lats and Politics were kept separate in the past and shouldn't be mixed in this modern world as well. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:4)

Some elders, I think, do not want the two systems mixed, in part because they have operated in distinct spheres of influence; and by doing so, have reduced competition between traditional and elected leaders. Cornell points out that conflicts in Native communities are "aggravated in some cases by the passing of traditional ways" (Cornell 1988:40). This statement seems to apply to the Carrier-Sekani situation as well. Duality in political matters seems not to have been as disruptive as subsequent attempts to mix the two systems and to define their parameters (as has been required in self-government modelling).

Torok (1972:39) identifies areas of traditional structural stress for the Six Nations Indians when he speaks of two kinds of chiefly status: those which are ascribed (Sachems), and those which are achieved (War Chiefs). He also describes the polarization of factions on the Six Nations' reserves, "when a Christian faction adopted the elected principle of representation while a conservative faction sought to maintain the hereditary council" (Torok 1972:40).

While Carrier factions do not follow religious lines, there is a split caused by the election principle based on achievement, and the belief in the inherent right of hereditary chiefs to govern based on ascription. Some government chiefs do not recognize the power and authority of hereditary chiefs, and vice versa. Some hereditary chiefs do not want to dilute the traditional ways by using all or part of someone else's system. To others:

> The A'zahs holding complete power is of the greatest concern because most people do not understand who the A'zah's are in their area; and to some they report the A'zah's do not set good examples in their communities today. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5)
>
> There is a strong indication that some A-ZAH are self serving thus taking names for granted for personal gain; this must be resolved in order to have good accountable government. (John, Prince, and Adams 1986:8)

Other members discuss problems found within the hereditary chiefs' group. One Nak'azdli Band member describes what she refers to as "Overwaitea Chiefs." These people are "want to bes." Someone who buys groceries has a potlatch and receives "any old name" without "real prestige." The Carrier had two types of names, those that are associated with land and the right to resources, and those that are not. As Kobrinsky (1977:107-108) points out:

> Commoners (and some nobles as well) had personal names which although their announcement required a potlatch, did not confer a reserved potlatch seat (or, therefore, a rank), and carried no expectation of continuous use. . . . A common name had no associated expectation or unbroken succession.

As Morice (1933:645) writes:

> . . . by far the greatest part of them [women's names] were hereditary, not in the same sense as those of the noblemen, but because they were names which had been borne by a grandmother or some other relative who had died long before.

Simply holding a Carrier name does not necessarily make an individual a hereditary chief, although some individuals incorrectly think it does, or are intentionally manipulating the system. Further, in order to receive a name, custom demanded consultation, preparation, a large distribution, and generousity. The underlying distinction between hereditary chiefs and named individuals is land. As one hereditary chief stated:

> If you're a leader you have a big name, you have to have big country with that name. That is how we were leaders. With your big name you have big land behind you. Aza'ne we call. That's bat'lats business. We don't have a big name for nothing, we have big land behind it. That is how you get a big name.
>
> My name is _____. The land that I have is my Uncle ___'s. Sustat area that's my grandmother's country. I take all that because I took the big name.

Many Carrier people do not accept the claims of hereditary chieftainship based solely on the possession of an Indian name.

Government leaders, modelling self-government, propose separate jurisdictions for elected leaders and hereditary chiefs. The proposal put forward by the Tribal Council suggests that hereditary chiefs deal with land claims overlap, fishing, hunting, and trapping issues. Elected leaders should deal with political issues and negotiation. Yet, the two roles stand in opposition to one other. This situation can be seen in the following statements:

> We must remember that the A-Zahs are care takers of the land and servants to the community, that the land must be protected for the use of future generations. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:9)

> In order to have a strong government, it is necessary to start developing our lands economically. Must have solid and collective Economic Development Plans. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:8)

It is rumoured that when the Babine Band separated from the Tribal Council, one clan in one village wanted the Tribal Council to represent its hereditary chiefs due to lack of the Band's respect for the territories belonging to the clans.

Although it has not been explicitly mentioned by the Carrier, Hudson (1983:204) pointed out that patrilineal trapping units have replaced the matrilineal clan land tenure system under *deneza* control:

> . . . Gitksan potlatching reproduces a system in which titles, and thus control of productive areas linked to those titles, are owned. While the possession of a certain title enables one to be considered to be a *deneza*, there is presently a clear separation between the possession of a title among the Tl'azt'enne and any relationship of that title to control over productive resources. (Hudson 1983:194)

He describes the current land tenure system:

> . . . clans, have remained an essential part of Carrier life. However, the *deneza*/clan-salmon complex of the nineteenth century has been transformed, and new relations of production have emerged. Resources are no longer controlled through the clan system, and patrilocal trapping companies control key elements of the bush mode of production. (Hudson 1983:235)

While I was conducting fieldwork at Nak'azdli, family trapping units were brought into mining negotiations with Placer Dome and Continental Gold Corporation, a process that recognized their importance in the decision-making process and their jurisdiction over trapping areas. The co-existence of a matrilineal *deneza* system and a patrilineal registered trapline system produces a potential conflict over which unit will make decisions over a particular piece of territory.

At the assemblies I have attended, the Carrier seem to use the terms "clan lands" and "trapping territories" interchangeably. Some individuals openly admit confusion in these areas:

> We need to know who we are and where we came from before we can decide where we want to go. We have an identity crisis, because of no knowledge of family trees, or trapping & hunting territories. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5)
>
> Traditional land ownership according to the clan system must be reconstructed.
>
> You should know where you come from, know where your grandparents originate from, and what clan they come from. As long as you know where you originated from you know who you are. This is what it is all about for landclaims. It also includes the tract of territory that comes from your grandparents. Your trapline from your grandparents that's where it all starts from.

While hereditary chiefs are ideologically viewed as the traditional leaders, trapping companies are the ones consulted by government leaders in matters that affect land.

As in the separation between potlatch and government, some people express a desire to maintain the separation between hereditary chiefs (who influence potlatch clan business) and resource control. Hudson (1983:195) points out that, "the role of deneza was relegated to clan functions which in contemporary terms means potlatching and associated exchange activities." As one of Hudson's informants stated:

> No deneza in Portage. They don't like it; they don't agree with it. But there used to be deneza in Tachie. They lead their societies. Deneza was just the boss in ceremonies, not trapping lands. Have to ask deneza before they do

> anything, and deneza has to say yes. Like people, they meet to do something, what to put up (in a potlatch). Potlatch, or something like that. Take idea to deneza. (Hudson 1983:195)

Attempts to reinstate deneza control over resource areas -- or mix the two traditional systems -- has the potential to create conflict.

## The Problems of Conceptual Hierarchy and Authority

Superimposed on Athapaskan organization just prior to contact, or very recently depending on diffusion, was a class system distinguishing between nobles and commoners. Although specific details on the nature of class among the Carrier are lacking, the acceptance of hierarchy and class may have differed depending on geographical distance from Gitksan influence. It may also differ based on its translation and concessions to European-western models. For example, Dennis and Kanakos explain:

> Long before the coming of the non-Indian to the Lake Babine territory, the Hereditary Chiefs, named and seated in the Balhats, made decisions for the Lake Babine Carrier. The Hereditary Chiefs seated in the Balhats are made up of the leaders of each of the subgroups of the clan. The Hereditary Chiefs obtain their power through the status of their name and through their attendance at the Balhats where they are counted on to witness and to contribute heavily to the distribution process. In each of the clans there is a designated leader, a spokesperson, and a mace-person. The Hereditary Chiefs are appointed to these positions through discussions held with the whole clan. As such they are offered additional respect, however, they also assume more responsibility for their people and for their own behaviour. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:7)
>
> Once a person assumed a hereditary name, the person is like a member of the Royal Family and has duties and responsibilities which are associated with the name. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:8)

Others have extended the royal family analogy as something similar to this statement by Morice (1892:111-112):

> [The Carrier] were divided into two very distinct social classes: the hereditary nobles, or notables, who possessed the land and enjoyed many jealously guarded privileges, and the common people who had no voice in the councils of the nation and acted as serfs to the notables, with whom, and for whom they hunted.

Steward (1961:740) describes Kwah as the "principle lord," and says that his subservient nobles held "tiny feudal domains." Both Morice and Steward differ from another sort of analysis:

> The Carrier were divided into clans, each with its hereditary "nobles" who controlled the hunting and fishing territories and dominated the potlatch. But even the most influential of the nobles were not authoritarian chiefs. Rather they were "first among equals," and had to depend upon persuasion and liberality to ensure compliance with their decisions, most of which concerned disputes among clansmen. (Mulhall 1986:37)

Miller (1955:277-278) points out differences in how authority is perceived in Native and Western societies. Western cultures, he says, view authority relations vertically: those in authority are higher up on a scale in altitude; authority passes down or flows to the lower levels of the structure. One in authority is often spoken of as "being at the top," "climbing the ladder of success," "rising or falling in a given position," as a member of "the upper class," and so forth.

To the Fox Indians, authority results from the "ongoing interaction between individuals" (Miller 1955:278). Since authority is temporary it cannot be hierarchically structured. The Fox Indians resent anything perceived to be an attempt to control another person's actions. The subsistence system was based on individual initiative and self-dependence, on the ability "to size up a situation and act on one's estimate" (Miller 1955:286). An order to a Fox Indian challenges his ability to act on his perceptions, and was an insult. The Fox political system was based on respect, not obedience. Miller concludes that in conceptual form the ability to control others is different from European ideas of vertical authority, which does not even exist between father and son (Miller 1955:286,288).

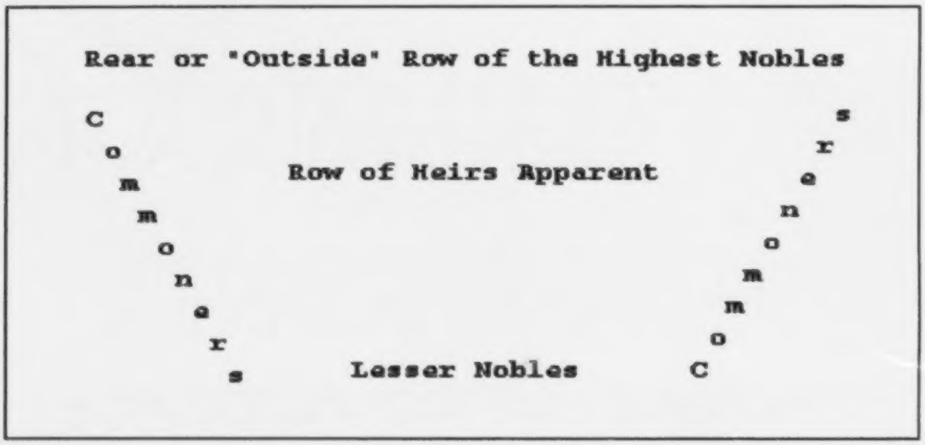
In their search to construct self-government systems the Carrier are modelling government based on vertical authority. In one plan, the Creator is at the top of the conceptual hierarchy and "empowers the elders." Likewise, the elders will give direction and empower the elected government chief, and so on down the ladder. At the tribal level, the House of Hereditary Chiefs, the proposed highest level in Carrier government, is based on ideas of vertical authority.

Yet rank and file Carrier do not wholeheartedly embrace vertical authority structures, nor do they necessarily see a vertical arrangement in the class system. This idea may be due to the imposition of the elected principle of representation based on achievement, which is structurally opposed to the hereditary system. It may also be due to the egalitarian principles that may still underlie Athapaskan Carrier thought and which would be opposed to hierarchy.

Although Kobrinsky (1973:108) states that no special privileges opposed the commoner and noble class (other than potlatch seating privilege). However, in Figure 6 (Kobrinsky

1973:134) he diagrams the placement of phratry personnel in Babine potlatch seating; and proposes structural analyses based on the oppositions Nobles/Commoners, Superior/Inferior, Above/Beneath, and Central/Lateral. Kobrinsky (1973:134) explains that "the vertical dimension was also employed as an expression of social hierarchy: the centrally placed clan chiefs . . . were seated on elevated platforms." He also notes that vertical "status diminishes with increase in lateral distance from the ideological center" (Kobrinsky 1973:134).

**Figure 6 Kobrinsky's Placement of Phratry Personnel in the Babine Potlatch Structure**


Rear or "Outside" Row of the Highest Nobles
Commoners
Row of Heirs Apparent
Commoners
Lesser Nobles

(Kobrinsky 1973:134).

The Babine case aside, some Carrier describe the "nobles" as being "among the people" or "with the people." This description is also suggested in Figure 6 (which shows the position of the "commoners" flanking the sides of the structure, placing leaders physically in the centre, or in the middle, of the people). As Morice (1892:118) states:

> Previous to the Carriers' contact with white men, a chief as *the* first officer, *the* leader of a place, never had an existence here. . . genuine chiefs were but recently unknown, and, in many places, have remained so to this very day. It sometimes happens, indeed, that one notable will obtain more influence and become more prominent than his colleagues; but . . . he was never *prior inter pares.*

The Carrier, today, when asked to do something, often say in jest, "You're not my boss."

The Carrier ideally describe someone in political office as a "servant of the community," "with the people not above them," leaders should give words which "assist the people." These types of concepts are not found in the vertical ideology underlying *Indian Act* government. They may have come from an Athapaskan past.

Duff (1951:32) writes that although matrilineal descent was well established among the Carrier, he does not know how deeply rooted the ideas associated with crests, exogamy, and class structure "sank in" -- "these were slower of acceptance." Hudson (1983:71) states:

> The issue of whether or not there were classes on the Northwest Coast is still problematic . . . The historical accounts point to a division between those who had access to certain resource areas, and those who lack such rights. Morice, however, does not provide an account of the exact relationship between 'nobles' and 'commoners.'

Hudson (1983:71) points out that while the Carrier differentiated between "commoners" and "nobles", and that while having a title meant having the right to use a resource area, clan members who lacked titles still had rights through clan membership to use these lands.

Jenness (1932:365) writes that the Bulkley River Carrier had three classes: nobles, commoners, and slaves; but "no royal class of rulers" like the Tsimshian. There was much fluidity between the noble and commoner rank, and Jenness (1932:365) points out that an influential commoner could readily attain nobleman rank by potlatching and receiving an appropriate title. But elsewhere he writes that "nowhere was society clearly demarcated into three strata (Jenness 1943:584), nobles, commoners, and slaves. Nobles and commoners were related and slaves were "prisoners of war, usually, if not always, women and children, who married their captors and obtained the same rights and status as other Indians" (Jenness 1943:584). Slaves were few, but more numerous near Tsimshian territory (Jenness 1943:584).

Evidently class is viewed differently depending on subtribe. At Bulkley River, if a noble married a commoner their children were commoners (Jenness 1943:528). At Fraser Lake, however, children are not considered nobles unless their fathers were nobles (Jenness 1943:585). At Stoney Creek, children were nobles as long as their mother was a noble; but if either parent was a commoner, they too were commoners until raised in status by potlatching. At Stoney Creek, rank depended less on ancestry than on number of potlatches (Jenness 1943:586).

Jenness (1943:489) maintains that the succession to ownership of a number of ranked clan titles, the "hallmarks of nobility," depended partly on inheritance and partly on the ability to validate the assumption of titles through potlatch. While the usual successor was sister's son or daughter, the title might pass to a distant clan member who was a commoner. Sons of chiefs rarely, however, became commoners (Jenness 1943:489,513).

Jenness stated that the Bulkley River Carrier in the 1940s considered "every one a noble, at least potentially;" and that the very distinction between nobles and commoners had broken down under European influence (Jenness 1943:513). Anybody could become a noble. Chiefs were often less esteemed than someone successful in the new economic system. People showed no respect for clan nobles. While "chietainship of a clan was highly coveted, . . . the authority of the position was in most cases comparatively slight" (Jenness 1943:513).

In the Carrier case, Harmon (1922:254) says that the *moodih* had "a little more respect" than others. Walker (1974:381) claims that the chief *dayi* was a "respectable man." Morice (1892:118) claims that notables had "more influence." The Hudson's Bay Company fort journal for July 30, 1820, states that while Kwah (perhaps the most influential Carrier chief) was "never Idle but can hardly get any to follow his example . . ." (Bishop 1980:196). Walker (1974:386) says that for the Central Carrier a *deneza* is a "sib head" rather than a "chief"; a *skeza*, in Central Carrier *dune unchane*, is a "big man" rather than a "noble"; and *auxtaten'e*, in Central Carrier '*oh dune* are "other people", rather than "commoners". This difference in translation he relates to culture change rather than difference in actual social categorization between the Northern and Central Carrier terms (Walker 1974:386-387). Like Duff, I am left wondering if ideas of rank, class, and vertical authority, at least for some groups, ever really "sank in" (Duff 1951:32).

Today, many Carrier people do not want hereditary chiefs to make decisions unilaterally for them -- simply holding a hereditary name in an exclusive system is not enough justification for holding office and making decisions for others. All should be eligible for office.

> You can't just go around and say I'm going to be deneza. That's why I say that I'd sooner have a general assembly to pick the Tribal Chief because this way everybody's satisfied. We have a little say in it. It's not right that a few people elect a chief.

One Nak'azdli Band member echoed her sentiments when he stated:

> I have a bit of a problem with the position of Tribal Chief being appointed jointly by the Azah Council and elected Chiefs.
>
> I'm not too happy with the voting procedures that have taken place in the past, but this is even going further by taking away our input at the local level, at the community level. And I have a hard time accepting this. It's almost like you're setting up a hierarchical system, an imperialistic system [with] lords and commoners . . . . That's too much.
>
> I think traditionally native people never lived in a hierarchy-type system. The leaders of the clans worked and lived amongst the people -- everyday people -- and we still see that today, but yet we're putting in a hierarchical position and I think that's going against what we believe about ourselves as native people. . . . This type of procedure is taking away our input at the grassroots level.

The defense of a hereditary chiefs' council is presented in the following argument:

> If your azah system is working properly, your clan system is working properly, your clans should be having meetings, to provide the direction to your azah. Tell them the direction they should be taking. You give the direction, they listen to you. That's what the Azah system should be doing. [So through a Council of Hereditary Chiefs choosing elected leaders] we're not thinking of disenfranchising anyone.
>
> Most of the people have no idea what the heck is going on -- who is running [for tribal chief]. I think this [government positions appointed by the azah] is going to be a fairer system for a broader range of people -- having a say in who is elected. I think it is important that we understand that. Consultation is the Indian way, the way we followed in the past. We talked to each other. Do you think this person should be in? We talked about it. That's the way it was done in the past. This election thing, voting with hands up, putting a ballot in the box is somebody else's system.

Long (1990:765) states that the elders, in direct participatory democracy, were involved in the decision making-process because they were repositories for tribal custom and traditional practices. Boldt and Long (1985:338) write that:

> The absence of personal authority, hierarchical relationships, and a separate ruling entity carried profound implications for the exercise of leadership in Indian societies. For example, elders performed an essential and highly valued function by transmitting the Creator's founding prescriptions, customs, and traditions. But they had no authority; they merely gave information and advice, and never in the form of a command or coercion. The elders were revered not because of their power or authority but because of their knowledge of the customs, traditions, and rituals and because of their ancestral links with the sacred beginning.

Long (1990:768-769) writes that at present the advice of elders is sought on an ad hoc basis; and that elders have a minor role in the decision-making process, placing them in an ambiguous situation. While "their symbolic importance remains" they are not functionally important. One elder said:

> I think it should be an Elders' Council because only the elders help. The elders are more powerful than the Azah.

> They care more. Instead of Azah Council there should be an Elders' Council to organize the Azah.
>
> Would the Azah and white way of politics work together? I think a Council of Elders would work.
>
> We should combine the elders and the way it works now. The elders could resolve the problems. Always go back to the elders. They have the information.

The formation of an Elders' Council has added another dimension to self-government modelling. But simply being an elder, some believe, is not justification for holding office. Some elders, like hereditary chiefs, do not set good examples.

## The Problem of Subjective Individualism

Barsh (1986:183) discusses a commonality in the world view of Native North Americans who:

> . . . conceive society as an ecosystem populated with many different but complimentary creatures, each fulfilling a unique role. Human differences are more significant than their similarities, hence statistical analysis is trivial . . . . Each human personality, and its subjective impression of the world, is intrinsically valid.
>
> If two people . . . see different things, the Native American interpretation is that both have seen reality, because reality is in the observer . . . .
>
> Important knowledge is too subjective and personal to be standardized and fossilized into dogma. (Barsh 1986:183-184)

Subjective individualism is characterized by respect for the personality of the individual, the moral equality of all, the lack of the right to judge others, and a doctrine of non-interference in the affairs of others (Barsh 1986:183-184).

Carrier individualism is mentioned by Monroe:

> From a psychological point of view the outstanding characteristic of Alkatcho Carrier culture is the latitude that is allowed for individual differences in ability and

> interests and in what might be called individual self-expression . . . . Even the potlatch with its attendant hierarchy of social statuses and its arbitrary standard of social success never quite succeeded . . . in overcoming this democratic and tolerant view of individual differences. (Monroe 1943:310)

Mulhall (1986:51) suggests that the Carrier have an ethic of non-interference with one another's behaviour, like that characterized for other Dene groups. The respect for differences and the ethic of non-interference has implications for self-government modelling:

> Every territory from Sus'tute Dene, to Yinka Dene, to Babine, all vary in the way they conduct their business in Potlatch, and as one Elder put it, 'we don't monkey around in other people's business; so on that basis there is no room for negotiations in implementing a "Bat'lats Government". (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:4)

The Carrier have extended this doctrine of non-interference in potlatch affairs,into relationships between individual band governments, and between the Tribal Council and band governments: "We can't go into someone else's territory and tell them how they should do their business."

The Carrier personality seems to reject the imposition, amalgamation, or homogenizing effects that would be created by forming regional government. This notion might also apply to the belief that the potlatch and the band system of government "should not be mixed." This concept is opposed to the notions found in western culture, where uniformity is approved of, and where equality is promoted through "sameness". As Barsh (1986:190) writes, "In the modern industrial state, 'freedom' means the right to be treated exactly like everyone else . . ."

While Carrier membership opposes the idea of developing a standard "fossilized" form for their government, leaders say:

> One format must be devised to conduct business so decisions will not be altered or postponed. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:9)
>
> We must make sure we are not diversified with our framework for self-government.(John, Prince, and Adams 1989:10)
>
> We must be of one mind.
>
> We must compromise.

I was told that a speech presented by one government leader was "a good chief's speech," reflective of Carrier cultural values. It also shows the problems of representation, individualism, and consensus:

> Why am I a leader? What am I trying to accomplish? Where did I go wrong? I'm one individual to represent 650 people. How do you set up a good system for every band? A leader can only do something because there is one community. But they are trying to lead everyone. Where do people end? Where does leadership end? Everyone has a heart and a mind. Everyone has their own mind. I want to hear from the Assembly. I am just one person.

### The Problem of Consensus and Dispute Resolution

Boldt and Long (1985:339) discuss how leaders and elders led without authority:

> Chiefs, like elders, led without authority. Their personality or skills as warriors and hunters would gain them a following, but the chief was on the same level as the follower - personal domination over others did not exist. In fact, most tribes had a multiplicity of chiefs at any one time, each without sanctioning powers beyond his personal charisma and proven ability. (Boldt and Long 1985:339)
>
> Government without rulers requires special procedures. The mechanism used in traditional Indian society was direct participatory democracy and rule by consensus. This implies an adequate level of agreement among all who share in the exercise of authority. Custom provided the

> mechanism to ensure that order did not break down through failure to achieve consensus. This is possible only in face-to-face society like the Indian tribes. (Boldt and Long 1985:339)

Long (1990:765) discusses the differences between the Native Indian decision-making process and that found in western society: the former, consensual in nature, involves "deliberation, negotiation, cooperation, and patience," while the latter involves "confrontation, aggression, impatience, and the 'adversary method'." In the Native system, when issues could not be resolved they were temporarily abandoned; and because the system did not work on the basis of majority rule, those not consenting to a decision were not bound by it. Order was therefore not broken down by failure to reach consensus (Long 1990:765). As Barsh points out:

> To minimize conflicts and wounded pride, . . . debates and public voting were avoided. Instead, issues were discussed widely and informally to seek agreement in advance. At meetings, speakers were encouraged to build on one another's words so that by the time all had spoken everyone was of one mind and a formal decision was usually unnecessary . . . . Above all, no one was forced to obey. Anyone seriously opposed to the issue simply did not attend or ignored the decision. (Barsh 1986:185-186)

Compared to this system, majority rule and representation compromise individuality, and are authoritarian (Barsh 1986:186).

Miller (1955:284) discusses how representation worked in Fox society:

> Since each Fox was represented in the council by a member of his own family group, and since considerable and extended inter-tribal discussion preceded all matters involving the collectivity, a concluded council decision had to take into account . . . the wishes of everyone . . . . Thus the act of decision-making itself insured the tribal validation of the decision. If there was any

> considerable opposition to a course of action involving full tribal participation, such a course could not be adopted, since this would make impossible the necessary unanimous decision; there was no necessity to force dissidents to participate in a policy of which they did not approve. The line between the people and the council was thinly drawn; . . . (Miller 1955:284)

Jenness (1932:366-367) discusses a similar process for the Carrier, in which "even the most powerful chief . . . rarely dared to act without consulting the clan chiefs in his phratry, and generally also the chiefs of other phratries."

Most grass root members, elders, and chiefs at the assemblies I have attended attempt to build on one another's words: "I have heard those speak before me. There is truth in what they say," or "I'm just one person," or "I may be wrong but I think . . .," and so on. In attempting to form a government, Carrier leaders, who traditionally operated on the principle of consultation and consensus (Ives 1990:255), have been trying to use the process to gain agreement on the nature of future government:

> Each and every village should be visited; and they should be given the chance to express their own opinion. This is not something that should be taken for granted by only a few. Furthermore, a position paper can be developed by each community. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:6)
>
> Every community should move at its own pace with this; no one should be rushed. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:6)
>
> Every person should be made aware of the present governing system we are under. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:6)
>
> There must be ongoing participation with community members when restructuring our form of Government. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:8).
>
> Educate the people in each village. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:6)

> Elders should be visited in their homes in each community as soon as possible, and recorded as [to] their knowledge, and advice to C.S.T.C. about their views on self-government past and future. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5)

Yet many leaders are frustrated by the process of consultation and consensus:

> If we wait until all the ducks are lined up we will never get anywhere. We've got to start somewhere. If we wait around we are just going to throw it around without any direction.
>
> I'm not sure what to do. We need either acceptance or rejection. Motions are passed that no one follows. We shouldn't pass resolutions that we all don't follow.
>
> We need time limits.

Clearly, the time-consuming process of reaching consensus, time constraints set out in federal policy, the passing of resolutions in order to proceed, and the differences between the Western and Indian ways of decision-making, have caused problems in developing a Carrier-Sekani self-government model.

The Carrier people recall a time when there was consensus in their communities, and want to regain it:

> People, in the past, were solidly united. Not just together at the village level but at the community level. We respected one another. We need that back.
>
> I think our leaders are to be given a chance. I know it's really hard to see it, for the second day now, look at the time now, it seems like no decisions are being made yet. You talk about unity. I don't see very much of it. It seems like one side is going this way the other side is going that way. Something really has to be really done . . . . . It's up to the people to step up and say what you want. Because the way people do it like this, the way this meeting is going, it's just a waste of our people coming here. Someone has to speak for us -- that's why they formed the Tribal Council. I know the leaders are looking for answers. I know it is hard for them. But please give them a chance and listen to them. I know they are young leaders. We have to respect chiefs, have to respect elders, but these days that respect is lost.

Cornell discusses conflicts in Indian communities, which have been "exacerbated by political tribalization," by the replacement of "indigenous systems of social coordination and authority with more rigidly structured ones rooted in non-Indian traditions" (Cornell 1988:40). Conflicts, he says:

> . . . are symptomatic of a more fundamental phenomenon: the breakdown of consensus within many Native American groups over the nature of the community and the content or meaning of the identities its members ostensibly share. Societies which were once relatively homogenous culturally have become increasingly heterogeneous, while established means of coping with diversity, of mediating conflict, of combining individual freedom with collective continuity, have been undermined. (Cornell 1988:39-40)

Cornell (1988:38) points out that, for North American Indian societies, "The loss of traditional means of dealing with conflict made the effects of factionalism severe." Reservation confinement not only raised the stakes (creating centralized positions of power and limited resources to be fought over) but narrowed the means of dispute resolution, which was traditionally based on physical separation.

The Carrier have traditionally handled disputes through reconciliation (Harmon 1922:211, 255; Jenness 1929:519), compensation (Morice 1893:195; Morice 1978:29; Harmon 1922:257), and separation (Harmon 1922:257). Individuals were, for the most part, their own judges; and there was no formal system of correction. The end of any dispute involved the goodwill of the participants.

> When two families quarreled, the leading chief of any phratry might summon the people to his house, strew his head with swan's-down, the time-honoured symbol of peace. [He would dance and chant and through oration recount wealth given away for his position which gave him the

> right to mediate disputes.] He would exhort them to settle their strife, and warn them of the troubles that would over take their families and clans if they persisted. In nearly all cases . . . the quarrelers seeing that popular opinion was opposed to them, distributed moose skins in token of submission. (Jenness 1943:518-519)

Matters like disputes and their resolutions that affected more than one phratry were discussed informally among the four (or five) phratric chiefs, who did not constitute a definite council (Harmon 1922:257). Carrier chiefs had no authority to enforce settlements or impose retribution, but had the task of "cajoling disputants -- spreading the white feathers of peace on their heads . . . while performing personal power songs and dances -- to reach an amicable settlement of their differences" (Kobrinsky 1973:109). Disputes were often handled through physical separation.

> If a murder be committed on a person belonging to a tribe with whom they are at enmity, they regard it as a brave and noble action. Should one Indian kill [a member of his own village] the murderer is considered a person void of sense; and he must quit his village and remain away, until he can pay the relations of the deceased for the murder. . . . (Harmon 1922:257)

Disputes when hunting, trapping, or fishing were often handled informally; one of the disputing parties moving to another spot in the bush (Morice 1893:79).

Carrier society in the nineteenth century was organized into a seasonal round of activities in which groups were together for only part of a year; in the summer they coalesced at fishing locations and during the winter they retired to separate hunting territories (Jenness 1932:47; Jenness 1943:481). This pattern probably would have minimized conflict.

Mulhall (1986:51) states that the Carrier 'opted for public subordination rather than confrontation," and had a general preference for conflict avoidance. During my field research I noticed that Government Chiefs and grass root members who were opposed to a particular event, motion, or idea temporarily opted out -- stayed away. Yet, self-government modelling, and the need to define appropriate structures, are not issues that will simply go away. Direct confrontation, once rare in the Carrier world (and still not generally approved of), is on the increase, partially because of the parliamentary system of debate, but more often because there are no adequate means of resolving disputes, especially those that are caused by structural problems.

When two rival government chiefs were unable to settle the disagreements between them, one chief in frustration reacted by shaming the other through potlatching. Clan members, in an attempt to reconcile them, made them "shake hands in public;" and danced and sprinkled down on their heads. Many observers described this attempt at reconciliation as "hocus pocus," and did not sanction its use in government business.

The reconciliation ceremony did nothing to resolve the intense conflict existing between these two men (and in the case of one of them it actually aggravated the situation). Elders and community members, as pointed out in the Azah Report, recommended that "politics or any other form of slander on another person should not enter the potlatch system" (Michell 1991:9).

One Carrier chief coined the term "break-awayism":

> We must be committed to one another at the tribal level or engage in break-awayism. We must stand behind our commitments. Needs commitment and compromise.

Others comment:

> Our government leaders are criticized for their aggressiveness and for going their own way saying, "I don't have to follow the rule."

> We are all guilty of attacks on one another. Forgetting the lesson that the elders taught us -- to respect one another.

Although the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council has attempted to maintain unity through the signing of accords and declarations of unity, with no adequate means of resolving disputes, Carrier bands tend to break away from the Tribal Council. Yet Carrier subjective individualism requires that the decisions of others be respected. As Tribal Chief Justa Monk stated of one band's separation from the Tribal Council: "If one band opts out I must respect that. If they wish to go on their own I have to respect that. So that's their wish and I must respect that."

### Problems with Leadership Selection and the Decision-Making Process

According to Boldt and Long (1985:337), in Indian societies no human being could have control over the life of another. Therefore the authority to rule could not, be delegated to any one member, or part of the tribal group. Notions of a ruling entity do not fit with traditional Indian beliefs and values. Indians do not divide the world up into the opposition of rulers and ruled.

> In the indigenous North American context a 'leader' is not a decision-maker, but a coordinator, peacemaker, teacher, example and comedian. He cannot tell others what to do, but he can persuade, cajole, tease, or inspire them into some unanimity of purpose. His influence depends on his ability to minimize differences of opinion, to remain above anger or jealousy, and to win respect and trust by helping his constituents through death, danger, and hard times at his own risk and expense. He is 'good talk thrown out to the people.'(Barsh 1986:192)

Leaders were not powerful but esteemed. They gained influence because of their productivity and generousity. To be a leader meant being materially poor. Leaders were supposed to give away their own wealth, not that of others (Barsh 1986:192).

> Modesty and humor are also essential to leadership, because they minimize conflict. A leader must bear no grudge, never take himself too seriously, and make others laugh at their disagreements. Humor has a remarkable ability to deflect anger. Self-critical humor is moreover an expression of powerlessness and a denial of ambition. Leaders who laugh at themselves are unlikely to be viewed as threats. Even so a leader must be self-effacing . . . . (Barsh 1986:193)

The case of Kwah (born about 1755) illustrates the qualities that the Carrier people admire in leadership. Kwah, who is well documented in fur trade journals and later through Morice's oral histories, originally is known through his war deeds (Morice 1978:23-27,88; Johnston 1943:22-23; Harmon 1922:174). In addition, he received the first metal dagger (of Russian manufacture) known to those parts (Johnston 1943:23), and he supported four wives (Monroe 1943:67-68). He is also well known for sparing the life of James Douglas (Morice 1978:140-144).

Kwah is shown to be industrious both at the fish weir and through his trapping efforts. Through his diligence and its resulting rewards, he gained rank and influence by redistributing goods at feasts and potlatches, until he was "naked and had nothing to trade" (Bishop 1980:195). While it is clear that good relations with the Fort made Kwah wealthy, he funnelled this wealth back into the exchange system. As Bishop (1980:196-197) explains:

> While Chiefs and nobles were no more wealthy than commoners, validation of their hereditary positions required great quantities of wealth for redistribution at potlatch and mortuary feasts. A chief had to work diligently to acquire the property needed for gifts. He had to demonstrate by example to his followers the virtue of hard work . . . .

Harmon's journal (1973:172) mentions a dispute he had with Kwah, when the latter attempted to show others his influence over the traders in an insolent and boastful manner:

> He tried every method, which he could devise, to persuade me to advance the goods, but to no purpose . . . . He then told me, that he saw no other difference between me and himself, but this only: 'you,' said he, 'know how to read and write; but I do not. Do I not manage my affairs as well, as you do yours? You keep your fort in order and make your slaves,' meaning my men, 'obey you. You send a great way off for goods, and you are rich and want for nothing. But do not I manage my affairs as well as you do yours? When did you ever hear that Quâs was in danger of starving? When it is the proper season to hunt the beaver, I kill them; and of their flesh I make feasts for my relations. I, often, feast all the Indians of my village; and, sometimes, invite people from afar off to come and partake of the fruits of my hunts. I know the season when the fish spawn, and, then send my women [wives] with the nets they have made, to take them. I never want for anything, and my family is always well clothed. (Harmon 1922:173)

In a reconciliation feast Kwah referred to himself as Harmon's "wife," and thanked Harmon (who had hit him) for "giving him sense" (Harmon 1922:176). An elder in Fort St. James remarks that Kwah could have killed Harmon and taken the Fort, or could have starved him out (which is something Harmon admits); but Kwah did not. According to this elder, Kwah was not 'weak' in apologizing to Harmon but humble and honourable. "That's how great he was."

In a similar incident involving William Connolly, in 1826, we know that Kwah was reproached by his people for his behaviour (Bishop 1980:195). In the Harmon incident, one of Kwah's fathers-in-law supported Harmon by saying, "My son had no sense . . . therefore deserved the beating which he has received" (Harmon 1922:177).

In bragging about the ability to command his wives, we can infer that Kwah could not command others. Further, the elders today point to Kwah's brother who was "smarter than Kwah," and who was consulted before decisions were made. This statement shows that the people believe that no one person is in charge. It reinforces the notion that consultation in the decision-making process is necessary.

Jenness (1943:518) says that Carrier clan and phratry heads had to expend wealth and labour to gain position. They had to keep an open house, help the poor and support the people in their relationships. "A stingy chief who sought only his own profit soon lost his influence" (Jenness 1943:518).

Long (1990:760) states that leadership in Native societies was based on merit, and was task oriented. The leader was the servant of the clan or tribe. Long points out how the Blood and Peigan Indians have evolved significantly away from the traditional functional merit-based system. He traces the evolution of leadership selection to three significant factors:

the band council elective system under the *Indian Act*, the transformation away from the clan as the basic group for political recruitment, and the failure to develop economies adequately (Long 1990:760):

> More importantly, the elective system carries with it a set of political values that are diametrically opposed, if not inimical, to those within traditional plains Indian belief systems. The traditional plains leadership selection process reflected function and merit grounded in the ideas of responsibility to the entire group rather than to individual members of the group, subservience to the group's needs, and selection based on consensus. In contrast, the elective system is based upon the ideas of universal eligibility for office, a canctarian concept of political representation between the individual and the representative, and a plurality system of election. (Long 1990:761)

Long (1990:760) says that the selection process in native societies stands in opposition to notions of leadership based on self-selection and demonstrated ability. Self-proclaimed ability to lead, like that claimed by contemporary native leaders, originally meant nothing (Long 1990:760). The orchestrated political campaigns of the present, which are election contests, are a big departure from how things were done in past where a distinguished person rose through the clan structure and eventually assumed leadership position (Long 1990:761).

Cornell (1988:37) points out that in the tribalization process: the ability to deal with whites became a desirable trait, which favoured more acculturated tribes people. It also was "good for ambitious individuals or factions seeking to expand their influence." Barsh (1988:185) says that in most Indian societies, leadership was viewed as a "frightening and overwhelming burden" because an individual is aware of his accountability for others. The view of leadership as "a burden for the selfless, an obligation for the most capable," stands in direct opposition to the elective system, which attracts the ambitious, the egotistical, who think they know what is best for all, those who want to run other people's lives (Barsh 1988:191).

Contradictions related to the decision-making process and leadership are illustrated for the Carrier in the following statement:

> I realize that leadership is one of the hardest things that a person can take upon himself or themselves. Leadership whether it is in the community, the country at large, or anything in regard to being a leader for whatever. In the last couple of days, I have heard comments, it's sad for me because we talk about unity and at the same breath, we want to go our own way. Community isn't based on those things. The same thing with power and control. There is only one being who has control, our Great Creator.
>
> Right now we are struggling over who will take control. Who will control who, but we haven't got that authority. We do not as human beings have the authority to do that. We are talking about the younger generation, their future. Well now let's be honest with ourselves. Is it really the younger generation we are concerned about or my own values? Leadership is not based on what I want but what we want. And go forward hand-in-hand.
>
> Leaders should be dedicated to the people. Committed means giving up yourself, irregardless of what stands before you. You put yourself on the bottom -- your people come first. Being with the people. Let's start practicing what we've always been talking about -- our spiritual values. Unity means being one -- as a whole.

Long (1990:762) points out a further problem:

> Economic egotism as a motivational factor in the decision to run for office [which] represents an almost complete reversal from the basic principles of the traditional leadership selection. Under the current system, many individuals seek office for personal financial gain. In the traditional system, sharing was an obligation imposed

> upon a leader, with the consequence that a leader often ended up with fewer possessions than fellow tribal members. (Long 1990:762)

The Carrier situation is similar to those outlined above, in which leadership is still believed to be a burden, based on sacrifice. Yet individuals comment on the contradictions:

> Sacrifice of leaders, five year sacrifice and become a millionaire.
>
> Dollar signs get in the way. Influence elections with money.
>
> Government funds divide. Money comes first but money isn't everything. Love, respect overcomes it all.
>
> Some leaders are aggressive. Don't they have to be?
>
> Our leaders, some of them are too pushy. Dictators.
>
> If leaders are outspoken the people are offended.
>
> The chiefs don't know the Indian way.

In 1990, The Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council Annual General Assembly passed a motion in order to develop the terms of reference for the positions of Tribal Chief and Vice-Tribal Chief. Ideally, leaders were to have the following qualities: they should be easily approachable, and non-intimidating, and be able to demonstrate good will in their conduct towards others; they should be fair and reasonable; they should make the effort to consult with the most qualified people; they should adopt the models of a true azah; they should act professionally and not take advantage of their positions and should set good examples; and they should know about aboriginal issues, understand the language, and the potlatch (Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council 1990:n.p.).

For many people, the Lakes District Council of Chiefs is recalled as an agency that served the people. The loose association of chiefs got together to improve conditions for the people, often at their own expense. Unlike the Council of Chiefs, the Tribal Council is represented by high profile individuals, who are perceived to have profited from their political involvement, and are not willing to sacrifice for the people. They are bureaucrats who "dance on the strings of DIA." Some of the resentment towards political leaders may stem from the differences between traditional Carrier and Western ideas of what a leader should be.

## Attitudinal Dependency

Long (1990:767-768) writes that:

> There is little question that the ascendant role of the bureaucracy in the decision-making process has fostered an attitudinal pattern of political dependency and subordination among many Indians. After decades of interacting with DIAND bureaucratic structures for their basic needs, while at the same time becoming reconciled to the lack of political effectiveness of their elected representational bodies and their own inability to control decisions that affect them personally, many Indians have developed an attitudinal pattern [that views their role in the political process as affected by government action but not active in shaping it]. A characteristic feature of this attitude is that many Indians have become reluctant to change the status quo out of fear that their own status as recipients of subsistence benefits will be affected. (Long 1990:767-768)

Long (1990:768) also says that the situation of dependency in native communities extends bureaucracy's control beyond what is deemed to be its legitimate concerns. "Tribal bureaucracy has extended its sphere beyond its legitimate function of rule implementation to assume a position of tutelage over the tribe" (Long 1990:768).

In the Carrier-Sekani case, many leaders and grass roots members are reluctant to part, not only with the Department of Indian Affairs, but with the band and tribal level structures as well.

> Some are happy with the way they are operating now, under the Elected Chief & Council (Band Custom) system, therefore see no need for a change. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:5)

Some chiefs and bands accept a democratically-elected political body, and some prefer the current relationship with DIA. In their opinion, the Band Council system of elected chiefs has become firmly entrenched in the everyday ideology of the people. To replace it with an undemocratically elected system of hereditary chiefs (or any other system) would result in unnecessary chaos, division, and community dissention.

One person commented that retaining "DIA saves us from the corruption of some of our leaders who help themselves" but to others, maintaining a relationship with DIA is a complete contradiction in the term and concept of self-government.

## Summary

In an attempt to formulate models for self-government, Carrier leaders are caught in an ideological trap in which they are reinterpreting their history to conform to western ideas of sovereign statehood. Grass roots members and elders indirectly reject the re-designation and reinterpretation of their traditional culture. The Carrier are having problems defining the appropriate unit for self-government because bands, tribal level government, and inter-tribal level government did not exist until recently.

Pursuing the nature of the single traditional potlatch system, in which deneza ruled authoritatively over their territories, has created innumerable problems. Dissention results when some elders maintain that the aza'ne never had full authority or wielded full power -- ever. They gave advice and counsel, but did not make decisions for other people. Many Carrier people, at least today, reject class designations and vertical authority structures.

Further, many government leaders and grass roots members do not recognize the inherent right of the hereditary chief to govern. Many hereditary chiefs do not recognize the power of government leaders -- they do not want to dilute the traditional ways.

Some leaders realize that the Carriers can never go back to the pure form of bat'lats because it can not address the needs and requirements of interaction with state society. These leaders, calling for either a synthesis, or even dramatic modifications, approve the use of the potlatch as a basic structure and philosophy of government.

Culture change has created other problems. The Carrier, historically, have divided their society into one in which traditional matters (the potlatch and deneza) operate in one sphere of influence, while government functions are performed in a distinctly different sphere. The elders do not want the potlatch and government mixed. Keeping the two systems separate, however, is directly opposed to the task government leaders are faced with in devising models based on traditional structures.

The Carrier are still operating under an ideological system of decision-making based on consensus; yet diversity in contemporary beliefs, compounded by regional cultural differences and time limitations, have forced leaders to pass motions that no one follows. Subjective individualism -- respect for individual differences and an ethic of non-interference -- has also caused some people to reject regional self-government modelling.

The Carrier seem to have no established mechanisms to deal with the disputes, which are arising because of the structural problems inherent in developing self-government. This problem has caused a situation in which bands are breaking away from the Tribal Council to "go it alone."

The leadership selection and decision-making process under the band system of government opposes indigenous methods. This conflict, combined with the economic egotism of some leaders, has lead to a situation in which grass roots members are reluctant to part with the Department of Indian Affairs. Some bands are suffering from attitudinal dependency on the Department of Indian Affairs and current Carrier government structures.

# Chapter 4 The Function and Structure of the Carrier Potlatch

In previous chapters, I have discussed how Carrier government leaders, in their search for traditional structures upon which to model government, have tried to identify how deneza and tsekeza "governed" through the potlatch. Yet up to this point in the thesis, I have not described what a potlatch is, nor how it functions in Carrier society.

In this chapter, in order to communicate the problems implicit in translating the potlatch institution into government, I will examine the nature, structure, and function of the Carrier Indian potlatch as it is revealed in historical and contemporary accounts. I will also discuss variations in potlatch practices for some subtribes and, will describe two Nak'azdli potlatches I attended in the summer of 1991. I will continue to explain some of the grass roots opposition that obstructs the formation of self-government based on the potlatch.

## Early Accounts of Carrier Potlatching

Kobrinsky (1973:122) proposes that the Carrier potlatch was preceded by a Woodland Athapaskan funeral feast which "became elaborated into the dispersion of wealth in addition to food along with the growth of the system of crests and phratries." Kobrinsky (1977:206-207) writes that a Babine Lake informant told him that the first potlatch there was given in the informant's grandfather's time by the first Lasamusyu chief.

Kobrinsky proposes that the potlatch-phratry system is a recent phenomenon, which evolved to control fur trapping areas.

Steward believes that the Northwest Coast complex spread late in prehistoric times; and that the Stuart Lake Carrier had the system at the time of the arrival of Europeans, dating it "two or three decades before whites entered the country" (Steward 1961:735). Goldman (1941) believes that when Europeans arrived, interior groups had not adopted the system. In the 1940s, the Alkatcho Carrier said that four generations ago they did not potlatch. Goldman (1941:417) dates the entire complex to the 1840s, which would have allowed it time to reach the Chilcotin.

Harmon (1922:180) who was a fur trader at Stuart and Fraser lakes from 1810 to 1819, describes an early Carrier potlatch:

> The relations of the deceased will then make a feast, and enclose these bones and ashes in a box, and deposit them under a shed erected for that purpose, in the centre of the village. Until this time widows are kept in a kind of slavery, and are required to daub their faces over with some black substance, and to appear clothed with rags, and frequently to go without any clothing, excepting round their waists. But, at the time of this feast, they are set at liberty from these disagreeable restraints. (Harmon 1922:181)

Harmon also describes the importance of potlatch payment:

> They hunt the beaver and the bear, more for the sake of their flesh, than to obtain the skins; for it is with the meat of these animals that they make their feasts, in remembrance of their dead relatives.
>
> At such festivities, they cut up as many dressed moose and red deer skins as they can well procure, into slips, about eighteen inches long, and twelve inches broad, and distribute them among their friends and relatives. And they firmly believe, that these ceremonies must be

> performed, before their departed relative can be at rest . . . . (Harmon 1922:253)

He also tells of other occasions for feasting:

> Besides the feasts made for their dead . . . the Carriers give others, merely to entertain their guests, who are frequently all the people of the village, as well as a few who belong to a neighbouring village. The following ceremonies attend such festivals. The person who makes the entertainment, who is always a Chief, boils or roasts several whole beavers, and as soon as his guests are seated around a fire, which is in the centre of his house. he takes up a whole beaver, and with a raised voice, relates how and where he killed it, that all present may know that it came from his own land. After that necessary explanation is over, he steps forward, and presents the tail end to the most respectable person of the house, and stands holding the animal with both hands until this person eats what he chooses.

The chief then passes it on to a second and third person who do the same as above. What is left of the beaver after it completes the entire circle is laid down, and another whole beaver is served around like the first. After the guests have tasted of every beaver, the remaining fragments are given to the women and children, or are put into the dishes of the men. The women then serve berries, placing it with ladles into the dishes of the men. They then sing songs written for the occasion, and sometimes dance to rattle and drum accompaniment. At the conclusion of the feast, guests return home with what they have in their dishes (Harmon 1922:260-261).

McLean (1932:156-159, in Hudson 1983:82) details seating arrangements in a potlatch held in the 1830s:

> In the beginning of the winter we were invited to a feast held in honour of a great chief, who died some years before . . . we directed our steps towards the "banqueting house", a large hut temporarily erected for the occasion. We found the numerous guests assembled and already seated around "the festive board"; our place had been left vacant

> for us, Mr. Dease taking his seat next to the great chief, Quaw, and we, his Meewidiyazees (little chiefs), in succession. The company were disposed in two rows; the chiefs and elders being seated next to the wall, formed the outer, and the young men the inner row; an open space of about three feat in breadth intervening between them . . . the relatives of the deceased acted as stewards, each of them seizing a roasted beaver, or something else, squatted himself in front of one of the guests, and presenting the meat . . . desired him to help himself.
>
> The gormandizing contest ended as it began, with songs and dances.
>
> The affair concluded by an exchange of presents, and the party broke up.

Morice (1892:112-113) in an early work, concurring with Harmon, states that the essential quality of the potlatch is found in the public distribution of goods and food connected to funerals. Its primary function was to release widows from mourning. In another work he writes:

> Among the Carriers, the widow of a deceased warrior used to pick up from among the ashes of the funeral pyre the few charred bones which would escape the ravages of the fire and *carry* them on her back in a leathern satchel . . . until co-clansmen of the deceased had amassed sufficient quantity of eatables and dressed skins to be publically distributed among the people of different clans . . . . (Morice 1978:6)

## Funeral-Succession and Other Potlatches

In a later work, Morice (1933:639) describes Carrier feasts as ceremonial banquets, held by chiefs after funerals, with distributions of food and dressed skins (which were replaced by blankets in later times) (Morice 1933:639). Morice (1933:640) writes that potlatch distribution was:

> considered as the legal fee, the proper means of acquiring one's title to the possession of the gens' hunting grounds, on which susbsists [sic] those great huntsmen who are, or were, the people among whom the potlatch prevails. There exists in their society a well-defined hereditary

> nobility, made up of the college of the . . . tenêzas, who alone possess the land of the tribe.
>
> . . . succession cannot be effected without paying for it, and the way to do this consists of a series of public feasts or donations, six in number . . . . (Morice 1933:640)

Of the six potlatches, three were important in the mourning process and for succession to titles. The first potlatch was held to honour the decedent; and included the ceremonial seating of deneza, and distribution by rank of food and "moccasin-sized dressed skins." The second potlatch was held by the aspirant to celebrate the disposition of the late deneza's remains. The third was held by the aspirant and co-clansmen to confirm the decedent's name. This, the most important of the series of potlatches, was attended by the entire local population and some distant villagers. After skins were distributed to those present, the aspirant was known by his uncle's hereditary name; but he still had three more potlatch distributions to give to secure his name and its status (Morice 1933:640-643).

Jenness (1943:528) writes that:

> Since the potlatch ceremony was the means of publicly affirming social positions, order of precedence in such visible matters as seating was of primary importance.

So as well as a means of validating inherited titles, the potlatch validated the economic and social status that went with it. As Kobrinsky (1977:121) points out, the potlatch is a "ritual of social definition," the "size of the gifts, of course, expresses rank level, chiefs always receiving larger portions than others of food and other prestations." Jenness

(1943:490-491) describes ranked seating for the Bulkley River Carrier:

> At feasts the clan chiefs sat together, the chief of the second ranking clan on the right of the phratry chief (i.e., the chief of the principal clan), and the chief of the third clan, if there were more than two, on the phratry chief's left. The nobles then stationed themselves nearer or farther from their chiefs in accordance with their rank; and directly in front of each man or woman sat the probable successor, nearly always a nephew or niece. The commoners and such slaves as were admitted lined up at the back or wherever they could find room.

Jenness (1943:513-515) describes the six stage succession potlatch of a Bulkley River Carrier chief. Here, he provides the Carrier and translated names of five of the six potlatches ("He Falls Down," "Arranging of the Arms and Legs," "Make A Fire," "Place the Corpse," and "Cease the Song of Mourning"). Rather than focusing on succession, these translated names show the importance of the potlatch for honouring the decedent. Jenness (1932:367, 1943:516) notes that for the Bulkley River Carrier, the funeral of a chief, which required six potlatches, placed a large burden on the incumbent and his clan.

If potlatching was considered the means for all Carrier to be considered properly buried (Harmon 1922:253) -- an elaboration of a feast for the dead -- one wonders how common six-stage succession potlatches were. Jenness (1943:516) mentions that the preparation could take two or three years, and that after the establishment of reserves six potlatches were too many. They were reduced in number.

Jenness describes the Finlay River Sekani potlatch, showing that it was less elaborate than accounts of the Carrier potlatches:

> Potlatches, which occur only in June and July when the families gather at Fort Grahame after the winter's trapping, are simple feasts in which members of the phratry that issues the invitation range themselves at the back of the house and wait on the representatives of the other two phratries, who sit on the floor along the sides. The Sekani do not dramatize their crests, as do the Carrier and Gitksan, no one wears a mask, and no one sings or dances; but they have attempted to introduce some principles into their seating arrangements inasmuch as the leading teneza' in each phratry occupies the central place and the other members of the group near him in the supposed order of their importance. (Jenness 1937:49)

Other types of Carrier potlatches, not connected to funerals or succession, are mentioned by Jenness (1932:367):

> Each event of importance - the erection of a large house, the return from a successful war raid, the coming of age of a son or daughter, a marriage, a funeral - demanded a feast and a distribution of presents.

Jenness provides some details on the activities associated with a divorce potlatch (1943:529), and with the initiation of members into the kyanyuantan and kalulhlim societies (1943:577). Monroe (1943:233) describes a lower Carrier potlatch in which a novice shaman marked his initiation by feasting and "distributing property to his professional colleagues." The newly initiated shaman displayed some of his skills at this feast, and his fellows joined in the display. For the Bulkley case, Jenness (1943:578) writes that gifts were given to pay liberally for seeing a new initiate in his new position as healer. For the divorce potlatch, gifts were given to blot out the disgrace of being divorced (Jenness 1943:529). In the latter case, I wonder if potlatch payment was similarly given for witnessing the change in status from married person to single person.

Mulhall (1986:49) suggests that the main function of the potlatch was to validate inheritance and the economic and social status that went with it:

> Among the Carrier, the main function of the potlatch was to validate the inheritance of a title by the person who gave the feast. People from a group other than the celebrant's bore witness to the succession and were rewarded with food and gifts. Without a potlatch, there could be no legitimate claim to the titled status that was such an integral part of the traditional economic and social system.

Mulhall (1986:n.190) claims that:

> Although some tribes gave potlatches for other reasons - to wipe out shame, for example - these "minor deviations from the basic pattern do not obscure the fact that the potlatch was a formal function . . . given for a serious purpose, that of validating the assumption of hereditary rights."

I might argue that as well as serving as the vehicle whereby titles were assumed, the potlatch functioned as an institution which ensured that the decedent was properly buried, which marked rites of passage for the living, and which validated other important events that people witnessed. Some of these occasions (in the case of widowhood and divorce) did not validate "hereditary rights."

According to Steward, Carrier potlatches:

> . . . were poor affairs compared to those of the coast . . . The potlatching Carrier could only give each guest a bit of food, perhaps a pair of moccasins or leggings, and a quarter or a sixth of a blanket. It was said that a man who had been potlatched might receive enough pieces of blanket to sew together into a whole blanket. (Steward 1955:175-176)

Morice (1892:113), seemingly writing for Franz Boas, says that the Carrier directly copied the Tsimshian potlatch with its clans, rank, polygamy, cross-cousin marriage, and totems. Morice (1893:173) discusses banqueting, the distribution of clothes and food, and the dances associated with potlatches for the dead, which he claims were the most common occasions to get dressed in ceremonial regalia. Morice writes that a Carrier nobleman in all his ceremonial splendor "must have been a sight worth beholding" (Morice 1893:180), indicating that he never saw one himself. Arima (1976:59) writes that the nobleman Morice described in the latter 19th century must have "pertained to an earlier period whose date cannot be precisely determined." Unlike Steward's description, Morice (1978:6) said that the Carrier had an "ostentatious ceremony called potlatch." While Jenness (1943:516) states that the potlatches of 1918 were not as elaborate as those of early years, partially because "chietainship now carried no shred of authority and very little prestige," the differences in potlatch ceremonial elaboration may have been due to an influx of wealth caused by the fur trade. They may also reflect differences in distance to the Gitksan source of influence. It is difficult to know how elaborate potlatches were, because both Jenness and Morice were working with memory culture.

Kobrinsky (1973), and Hudson (1983) point out the complexity of the Carrier's coastal adaptation which Morice may have simply assumed in his 1892 article. Steward (1961:733) points out for the Stuart Lake case that, "It was the title to nobility, rather than the land for subsistence purposes, that was theoretically inherited by a man's sister's son."

Goldman (1941:404-412) points out that the Alkatcho Carrier adopted the phratric system and adapted it to bilateral kin groups. He writes:

> . . . significant are the variations in phratric organization among the Athabascan tribes on the periphery of coastal influence. Invariably, where the geographic position of the tribes has introduced two sets of cultural influences, i.e., from the coast and from non-matrilineally organized tribes, unilaterality and clan exogamy have become weakly established; the clans show marked instability and, as in the case of the Chilcotins and Salishan Shuswap, appear to have functioned primarily as honorific societies. It appears further that, unless continuous marriages, as among the Bulkley River Carrier, have contrived to overhaul drastically the basic pattern of Athabascan social organization, the phratries or clans became adapted to or superimposed upon a type of social organization not entirely congenial to matrilineal, exogamous sib units. (Goldman 1941:411)

Kobrinsky (1977:207) writes:

> . . . there are examples of peoples flirting with potlatches and crests without descent groups or well-developed rank and class. Goldman's (1940 and 1941) Alkatcho Carrier seem to illustrate this well enough, so that it remains possible that the northwest Carrier, too, had been dabbling in crests and potlatching before assuming coastward characteristics.

If the potlatch land tenure system only slightly pre-dated the arrival of Europeans -- in some areas it is dated to 1840 (Goldman 1941:417), and if it became eroded under the first missionaries and fur traders in the late nineteenth century, as Steward (1941a:499) claims, its apex was very short. Early potlatching is shown to be intimately associated with funerals. In some parts of Carrier territory, as among the Lheit-lit'enne, matrilineal clans, if adopted at all, were soon forgotten; and may have functioned only as honorific societies without change to the land tenure system. Goldman (1941 n.p.) reports this to be the case among the Alkatcho and Sekani.

Although potlatching was banned between 1884 and 1951 (Hudson 1983:245), Loring, the Indian Agent, and Morice "permitted the 'Cemetery Ceremonies' because they were not traditional potlatches. Tomb-houses were fairly recent, and "although their erection was accompanied by a potlatch, they were also blessed by the priest" (Mulhall 1986:116-117).

Morice (1933:639) writes that the potlatch persisted despite attempts by missionaries and other authorities to prohibit it because potlatch distribution was essential to the land tenure system. Paradoxically, Hudson (1983) examines the period 1806-1977; and describes the forces (church, state, capitalism) which altered the former land tenure system, structured around clans and deneza.

Hudson claims that potlatching has changed from a means to validate matrilineal deneza titles, and thus rights to clan fishing resource areas, to an institution within which "resources produced by domestic groups and patrilocal hunting groups are redistributed" (Hudson 1983:199). The economic function of the potlatch, according to Hudson (1983:245), is served at the exchange level rather than through the control of economic production. He writes that contemporary Tl'azt'enne clans:

> can best be seen in functional terms as exchange or potlatch groups, for it is through a series of reciprocal

> exchanges, culminating in a ceremony known as batlac, that the operation of the clans appears. (Hudson 1983:195)

The potlatch is still intimately associated with funerals:

> The clans are elements in a system of reciprocal exchanges which start at the death of a member of one of the clans. Members of the other two clans then perform a series of services for the clan of the deceased - sending messages of the death, digging the grave, preparing the corpse, erecting the tombstone, and other activities. The erection of the tombstone signals the end of that particular series of exchanges. But then the clan of the deceased is obligated to pay those who provided the services. This is done at a potlatch, which also translates into English as "payback". (Hudson 1983:195-196)

Hudson (1983:196) notes that as well as paying back for services rendered:

> potlatches are a means whereby a person changes clans, or assumes a title, or clan name. These, though, often are part of the first type of potlatch, as an heir assumes his/her father's/mother's title or clan affiliation.

Hudson (1983:197-198) writes that because "the clans are the vehicles in which these are carried out" and because "the whole system is reproduced through matrilineal descent" potlatching "itself is an event which reproduces the clan structure and its exchange obligations by emphasizing the functions of clans in the exchange system."

Even though Carrier production (trapping and wage labour), is controlled by independent patrilineal groups and individuals, the matrilineal clan-potlatch system cross-cuts trapping groups and ties people through exchange (Hudson 1983:242).

> A more structured framework within which exchange takes place is provided by a matrilineal descent group-potlatch system, which links all the members of the community. Through the application of the principle of matrilineal descent, everyone has an ascribed status. Members of the matrilineal descent group in turn perform services for each other which ensure that the community is

> interdependent. Through potlatching, a structure of receivers and givers becomes evident. (Hudson 1983:162)
>
> These exchange units link everyone in the Carrier villages of the Stuart Lake watershed in a formal system of reciprocal obligations, set in motion by the death of a member. The descent groups cross-cut local residential groups and trapping companies, and function in part as a means of redistributing bush resources and industrial products throughout the community. (Hudson 1983:239)

As well as serving economic functions the potlatch is a means of maintaining and transmitting Carrier identity. As Kobrinsky (1973:105) writes of the Babine case:

> . . . the potlatch hall is not only the central theatre where the myth - historic narratives and dramas are performed, it is also one of the key settings wherein the highlights composing the histories and acquired potlatch successes are vital elements in the histories associated with titles. To bear a title, then, is to share in a perpetuity; to have a voice and breath beyond personal mortality.

Potlatching "serves as a vehicle for history" (Kobrinsky 1973:107) and is "a ritual of social definition" (Kobrinsky 1973:121).

Hudson (1983:164) concurs:

> Potlatching serves to maintain the purpose of matrilineal descent groups, again a cultural legacy from the past, or . . . , "the people of long ago." All activities are carried out in a framework of kinship, which extends horizontally to encompass all Tl'azt'enne, and vertically to touch up with one's ancestors, who occupied the same space at a different time.

Potlatching and matrilineal descent, have prevented capitalism from completely reorganizing Carrier society. "While transfer payments may go directly to individuals, exchange obligations serve to redistribute cash, for example, to the rest of the community" (Hudson 1983:25). "The exchange units also provide a ready symbol of the collective nature of the Carrier society" (Hudson 1983:239).

### Variation in Potlatch Practice

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, the elders say that each Carrier village differs in how they potlatch. Duff (1951:31) describes a potlatch at Stoney Creek, which is based on a moiety arrangement:

> The two "parties" still function at Stony Creek. I had the opportunity to see the way this moiety arrangement worked out at a headstone raising ceremony. A Laksilyu man, assisted by two sisters, had purchased a headstone to be placed on the grave of their father, dead about a year. He "hired" the other party to "do the work." The stone was carried from the house and placed on the wagon. Then members of the other party (and members of other phratries from other subtribes) made speeches. Long new ropes were tied to the front and rear of the wagon, and amid shouting, singing, and merriment it was slowly hauled to the graveyard, the man's own party pulling backward, all others pulling forward. Later the ropes were cut and divided among the second party, who were also "paid" with boxes of groceries that night at a feast. Other Laksilyu members shared the cost. (Duff 1951:31)

In the Lake Babine community, the system operates with four phratries (clans).

> Each of the clans is broken into five subgroups. . . A person's clan and subgroup affiliation is determined through the mother's side. The clan names and territories are also passed matrilinealy through the mother's side. In addition, each individual belongs to a sponsoring clan which is traced through the father. The sponsoring clan is the clan that works for, performs tasks, and raises money for an individual when they are in need of help or when they are sponsoring a Balhats. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:5-6)

Each individual, clan, subgroup, and sponsoring clan is distinguished by its own symbols, which are displayed on articles such as blankets, headdresses and drums (Dennis and Kanakos n.d. 6).

Recent Lake Babine potlatches are described by Dennis and Kanakos (n.d.:13-14):

> On April 19, 1987, a Balhats was put on by Mary Ann Dennis. At this time Mary Ann of the C'dim ten Clan received the name *Dzilt yik Tse'ake*. This name, and the cost of the Balhats itself confirmed upon Mary Ann a very high status and importance with the C'dim ten Clan. As Dzakaza Mary Ann becomes spokesperson and decision maker for her clan and in conjunction with the other Denesza and Dzakaza makes decisions about the direction of the community. As such, she assumes a political role as a leader recognized throughout the Lake Babine community.
>
> On June 7, 1987, Jimmy Williams of the Frog Clan--J'ilh tse yu clan held a Balhats to confirm his name. This is known as a headstone drying balhats at which time Jimmy Williams demonstrated his status through the expense and ceremony of the Balhats. At this Bahlats, Roger Patrick announced his intention of taking the highest J'ilh tse yu name.
>
> On January 25, 1987, Billy J. Tom had a Balhats to pay his sponsoring clan for legal expenses which they gathered on his behalf.
>
> On May 14, 1987, Casimel Williams' house was burned to the ground. Since this time his sponsoring clan, the Gil lan tens, have been giving him money and clothing. He will have the opportunity of repaying back his sponsoring clan when he decides to call a Balhats for it.
>
> On June 20 and 21st, 1987, the Lake Babine are holding a Trapline Balhats -- Assembly. At this time the transfer of traplines will be confirmed and the formation of a trapline association will take place.

I had the opportunity, during the summer of 1991, to hear a Babine woman and a Nak'azdli man discuss differences in their potlatch practices. The Babine people have a far more rigid seating plan than do the Nak'azdli people. Unlike the Nak'azdli people, who wait about a year after death to "pay out" the Babine people perform the payout potlatch immediately after the individual's funeral. Like Harmon's example, (1973:253) the Babine people believe that unless the payout occurs immediately, the decedent's spirit will not find its way to heaven. The widow, in the Babine case, sits near the door of the potlatch hall for a year. After that year, she does not have a formal coming out potlatch as described below, but goes to a private party and celebrates.

## Two Nak'azdli Potlatches

In the summer of 1991, I attended two potlatches on the Nak'azdli Reserve at Fort St. James. Both of these involved repayment for funeral expenses; neither were connected to succession. The descriptions that follow are based on my observations at those ceremonies.

The first potlatch, was hosted by the Lasilyu, (Frog clan) for repayment for the burial expenses of one of their members, who had died about a year earlier. This ceremony parallels the one described by Duff (1951:31) for a Stoney Creek potlatch. The widow described and interpreted the ceremony as follows:

> To drag the headstone up on a sled has a lot of feelings for everyone and we sing Carrier songs all the way. You start at the foot of the hill and use about 200 feet of rope. The head stone is on the sled with family members and the rope is laid out. A cutter will sit at the head of the sled and pullers can not look back. When the cutter cuts the rope he or she will put money down. Mark their names down. This is used for good, it is their way of cutting the family tree. The Elders sing all the way. After the headstone is laid, rope is passed out from the family. Everyone prays and the widow or widower will say good bye to his or her family members and friends. This is the final act you let go. Each time the rope is cut that person is being cut off from their loved one. Family can take part but the rope that is tied on them after the headstone is raised, they must give that rope to someone

> else, this person will carry your load and you will get on with your life.

This custom, not usually practiced at Nak'azdli, was done in this case, because the widow of the decedent came from Burns Lake. Some Nak'azdli members found it strange.

Upon entering the potlatch hall I was told by the person doing the seating that I could sit anywhere, but it was suggested that I sit with a contingent of non-natives. A row of seats was placed along the back wall of the potlatch hall and the children, regardless of clan, were seated together. The people I asked both during and after the ceremony could not confirm which clans were seated along which walls.

The Lasilyu clan, "paying out," was stationed in the centre of the room, its elders seated at tables, surrounded by potlatch goods, such as blankets and flour, which were piled on the floor near a table that held smaller souvenirs and goods.

Sandwiches, donuts, and cakes, and coffee and tea, were handed out by the Lasilyu clan to all those seated in the potlatch hall. Food and coffee distribution continued throughout the ceremony.

The potlatch Speaker welcomed everyone and stated the reason for the potlatch, which was, "to pay out for _____ ______," the decedent. The Lasilyu clan members then began contributing money at the central table, announcing each individual contribution. As they collected money they immediately paid out for each service rendered to the decedent. For example, as money was collected for the people who pulled the stone, the donors were announced; and then the money was paid to the individual who performed the service. As money was collected for the Speaker, donors were announced and then the Speaker paid and so on. Some people who were kin of the decedent but not in the Lasilyu clan, contributed money for distribution; but after their names were announced, the Speaker said, and the elders noted "no return." This action meant that the money did not have to be repaid by the Lasilyu. Although the money is paid out on behalf of the Lasilyu, donations come from all clans.

After the series of cash payments for specific services provided to the decedent and his clan, a variety of secondary distributions (including pillows with the decedent's face on them, a pair of moccasins, a hide jacket, and other crafts) took place. Distributed by the widow, recipients were those to whom the decedent was particularly close, or the family grateful. The people were introduced and given gifts.

The widow, a member of the Lohjibu clan who up to this time had been active in the centre with the distributions, disappeared and came out dressed in colourful clothing provided by the Lasilyu clan. She had been wearing old clothes or dark clothes for a year; had to avoid alcohol, dances, and bingo; and had to attend church. Her reappearance was a sign that her mourning period was over and that she was now free. A collection was held, and the Lasilyu people who provided the clothing and dressed her were paid. The widow walked around the inside of the potlatch hall, and she "showed off" her new clothing.

A third distribution occurred in which everyone in the hall received juice packages, face cloths, and tea towels. The more important people were given crocheted afghans, flour, cases of pop, and so on. Everyone in the potlatch hall also received a piece of the rope used to pull the headstone. At this time the Speaker announced other clan events that had taken place since their last gathering (a wedding). The widow had also commissioned a talking stick, and a small payment was given to the man who made it (with the majority of the payment held over until the next potlatch).

A Lasilyu elder, with the accompaniment of drummers, sang the decedent's maternal grandfather's song. A non-native woman sang in Swedish, which was the decedent's paternal grandfather's native language. For this song she was given a small gift.

Towards the end of the potlatch, the widow walked around the potlatch hall; and distributed cigarettes to everyone, and passed out copies of her life history. She gave a short speech of thanks to those who had contributed money; all those present were invited to take food home. The widow specified that in potlatch:

> you can hire someone from your own clan as long as they are not related to you in any way. It is bad to hire your own family and you can't pay someone from your own family. While they can perform services, they may not be paid for doing so. People outside the family who are hired to perform various duties: washing and dressing the body, building the coffin and outside box, cooking, driving, book-keeping, serving, inviting people to the potlatch and seating them, speakers. These people are paid out when you can afford it. The pay outs are done by the Elders of the deceased person's clan in conjunction with the immediate family. By working with the Elders the husband or wife is showing respect and "healing" at the same time.
>
> A true Indian sees it this way and it shows that even if you belong to another clan, you still belong to their family. If they do not respect you, however, they leave

> you out. Sometimes people do not understand the bond between families and leave them out. When the Elders see this, they do not approve of that clan or what they have done.

One week later I attended a second potlatch, which was surprisingly different. While the first potlatch was open to all, the second held the strictest of seating principles. I stood by the door until invited by a member of the Lohjubu (Bear clan) to join them. The seating pattern roughly followed that shown in Figure 13 in Appendix 2. With one exception the Lasilyu sat on the left hand side as one enters the hall, and Lasamasyu, the host clan, sat in the centre.

The second potlatch was also connected to the repayment of funeral expenses, but it did not involve a widow or widower. The speeches, announcements, and paybacks, were in Carrier; and some traditional items were distributed into garbage bags that were handed out to everyone in the hall (guests hold up the bag and the hosts place the objects in them). I received: 2 drinking glasses - so I would remember the decedent; 10 lbs of sugar; 1 package of dry meat; 2 packages of cooked (and still warm) beaver meat; 2 cans of pop - cola and orange; 1 tin of sardines; 2 tins of soup - broccoli and vegetable; 1 tin of peas; 1 tin of Hunt's tomato paste; 1 tin of Hunt's crushed tomatoes; 2 loaves of bread; 2 lbs of rice; 2 lbs dry beans; 1 package of cookies; 1 apple; and 2 jars of home-made preserves.

I noticed that elders, at least one of whom is deneza, received twice as many goods as others present at the potlatch. After the distribution, the Speaker made a formal speech, stating the purpose of the event, and that we are all obligated to pay-out or pay-back at some point. Their clan had done what was expected of them. They did not dance or sing.

The word bat'lats or balhlats is recognized as the Carrier version of the Chinook jargon term, which means "to give away" (Morice 1933:639), although many times it is translated by the Carrier as meaning "pay-back." Language reveals the most essential elements underlying the institution -- the giving of gifts for witnessing events, and for payment for particular services rendered.

I had the opportunity to hear a Nak'azdli woman and a Nazko woman discuss the differences in their potlatches. The Nak'azdli woman translated the word bat'lats to mean "pay-back;" while the Nakzo woman said that in their territory, a bat'lats was more like a "give-away", more of a feast and party. Potlatches among the Lower Carrier groups are no longer organized according to clan; everyone contributes food to the wake and the funeral.

The situation parallels that of the Fort George Indian Band. While doing fieldwork in 1988 and 1989 with the Lheit-lit'enne, I attended two funerals. At the time of death, everyone pitches in, prepares the food, and contributes to a wake and funeral. There are no prescribed functions by clan. Following a Catholic funeral, and burial in Fort George Park, band members and friends gathered at the Prince George Indian Friendship Centre, where sandwiches and beverages were served. In one case, a man passed cigarettes around in a bowl. In another case, sometime after the funeral, one very old elder was upset because the possessions and home of the decedent had not been burned.

## The Potlatch as Government

I asked one Babine woman, who is in line for a hereditary chief's name, what she thought of potlatch government. She stated that potlatch and government are "apples and oranges," and should not be mixed.

The contemporary potlatch, at least at Stuart Lake, is a ceremony that has at its core reciprocal obligation between matrilineal descent units. The potlatch involves not only payment for particular services rendered, but payment for all in attendance who witness and validate a particular claim. Stuart Lake potlatches do not regulate land ownership through clans, but *deneza* are still ceremonially important.

Some government leaders are translating the potlatch to be a focal institution, which governed. In their search to discover its political uses they are ascribing to it more characteristics than the early historical evidence, and contemporary evidence, implies. As I pointed out in the preceding chapter, they want to know "how a *deneza* ruled." One man said that the potlatch, though it is used today in cases of adoption into clans, name giving, funerals and inheritance, traditionally involved almost all aspects of Carrier lives. In their search to translate potlatch into government, some people are ascribing to it a meeting-like quality:

> The Bahlats system is a traditional system of government which looks after our spiritual, economical, cultural, educational and social needs. (Dennis 1990:2)
>
> The Balhats is a ceremony which reflects the core of Carrier culture and values. It is a ceremony which validates spiritual, political and economic realities through the giving of gifts and money.
>
> It acts as a central forum for all important communications in the society. As such it is a place where ideas and plans are discussed, often over and over. Through this process there is community input and community consensus. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:7)

While phratry (clan) chiefs met informally to discuss issues, these discussions took place outside the potlatch. As Jenness (1943:481) has been quoted as saying, the Carrier lacked a "central nervous system to coordinate" activities; they had no established councils, but were divided into a number of independent phratries. Similarly, the types of issues pertinent to potlatching -- deciding on names, collecting goods, and other potlatch plans, except repayment -- are discussed before the potlatch, not during it. These issues are "clan business," not government business.

The potlatch is also ascribed distinct political functions:

> Balhats are held for political, social, economic, and spiritual purposes. An example of a Balhats held for political purposes is the Balhats held on May 14, 1987, when the Feathers were raised for the Federal Department of Indian Affairs Government Officials to open the Self-Government Negotiations.
>
> Another example of the communities political expression through the Balhats occurred on April 4th and 5th, 1987, when the boundary issue between the Gitsan/Wet'suwet'en Nation and the Carrier/Sekani Nation was discussed. Other political issues dealt with through the Balhats include Land Claims and internal political issues. And on a personal level it can deal with issues such as settling

> insults, apologies, and retribution. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:12)

Cornell (1988:28) writes that "Native American societies . . . generally lacked what are called polities; formally distinct institutional structures in which secular authority in civil affairs is vested." Collective activity was guided by "custom, historically-evolved practice and agreed upon modes of action" (Cornell 1988:28). This seems to have been the case with the Carrier as well; but in their search for political uses of the potlatch, some Carrier, as well as proposing the potlatch forum for central government, have translated their symbols, and these translations show strong concessions to western political-legal influence:

> On May 14, 1987, the Lake Babine Carrier held a Balhats (Potlatch) at which time the Feathers, the Grand Law of the Carrier People, was raised to the officials of the federal government as a sign of the beginning of the negotiations leading to Self-Government. For the Carrier people, the Feathers Ceremony signals that the negotiations for Self-Government are officially opened and that they are legally binding. Feathers is the highest law of the Lake Babine Carrier Society. It is similar to the power of a judge who passes a sentence. There is no recourse. Feathers in Balhats means that the purpose of the Balhats is legally binding. For example, should there be a dispute between two Carrier people, feathers would settle the insult and friendship would result. In preparation for the feathers pronouncement in the Balhats the Rattle Cry is sung. The Rattle Cry symbolizes the importance of the feathers. The Rattle Cry calls for complete attention and respectful behavior. It is like the playing of the clan's anthem and has the same effect as calling a court to order. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:2)

The potlatch has evolved, and/or has been translated to take on characteristics absent in its pre-government form. In operating as "sovereign nations," the Carrier and their neighbours, as a part of the land claims process, are altering the potlatch institution to facilitate government functions. Some members do not accept the change.

Some elders maintain that the bat'lats, as it is practiced today, differs from how it was practiced in the past. To use the new form for potlatch government (or the old form) would be, and is, a misrepresentation of the institution. Some elders reject the premise that potlatch is government. "It is not what the young chiefs say it is."

> Many people have no knowledge of what the true Bat'lats system was, and felt they needed to be educated first before they could make a proper decision to determine whether or not the Bat'lats system was a good way of governing themselves in the future. (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:3)

In order to facilitate self-government, it was suggested that the elders could "begin working with [people] in their forties and they in turn can teach the young" (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:6). As one person wrote, "Elders must be willing to encourage to assist in re-establishing the traditional form of government primarily in a role of educators." It was suggested that the "younger generation should be encouraged to work toward receiving the junior A-ZAH names for the purpose of learning the Bat'lats system" (John, Prince, and Adams 1989:9).

As I pointed out in the preceding chapter, the Carrier had two kinds of names, personal names and ranked names. Both types were confirmed at a potlatch. Personal names were not connected with a potlatch seat or rank. While groups in the northern part of the region may have given ranked names to younger people, "Prince" and "Princess" names have been rejected by others from different regions, who claim that ranked names were given only to those with proven ability (usually older persons). In a monthly report Dennis (1990:1) writes that:

> I know that the Balhats system is alive and well. It is being practiced still and that the Azahne are still practising their ways and being responsible. But, the whole problem is that it is being practised by only a few people and few member Bands of the C.S.T.C.

He continues in his report:

> Regarding the development of a curriculum for the Yinka Dene School Board on the Balhats system, some of the Elders strongly stated that the Balhats system can not be practiced [in school]. There are certain taboos in the Balhats system and the act of pretending that you are having a Bahlats is one of them.
>
> If we are to move forward in this society we will have to make slight changes in the Balhats system and one of those changes is to develop a curriculum in the Balhats school system and to create new issues to deal with such as Education, etc.. (Dennis 1990:2)

Although Walker (1974:385) claims that the priests outlawed the potlatch even though it had no religious significance, at a Nak'azdli Elders' Society meeting I was told that the elders were against teaching the potlatch in the school system, against mixing it with government because, "It's sacred, sacred to us." As I pointed out earlier, the potlatch underlies Carrier identity. It relates history, and connects the living with "the people of long ago." The very reasons that the priests wanted it outlawed are the very reasons that the elders do not want it corrupted -- it is the core of Carrier cultural identity. It maintains the important distinction between Native and non-native ways.

According to Dennis and Kanakos (n.d.:4), "All the Balhats have spiritual purposes and meaning. Some specific examples include Balhats for death, burial and making of a song." They cite these examples:

> On May 3, 1987, a Bahlats was held for [a woman] to receive a song composed by her sponsoring clan. The Bahlats signals her coming out of mourning for her mother's death. The song told the community about her sadness and great loss.
>
> On June 14, 1987, a Balhats was held to mourn the death of a baby. At this time funeral expenses were paid. (Dennis and Kanakos n.d.:14)

Many people say that because the potlatch serves these sorts of functions, they do not want it used for purely political purposes.

Carrier elders maintain that people learn by watching and doing, and not by asking questions. They have rejected teaching the potlatch in schools, although they maintain that the potlatch may be learned through participation. Jenness (1929:26) points out that education involved teaching rules of etiquette and behaviour through folk-tales. Important behaviour included having respect for elders, widows, the infirm, and those of lower rank. Particularly important was insuring that one did not mock another's misfortune. This method of education is not the same as lecturing on the structure and function of the potlatch.

> When [the elders] come to make a decision young people say, "Too old-fashioned." Want to live in white society. They don't understand it [the potlatch]. When someone dies is the only time someone recognizes where this person is from. We start asking what clan is she in. We automatically know. Once participate in a potlatch you know what it is all about.

## Summary

Early accounts of potlatching suggest that the Carrier potlatch was a funeral feast that became elaborated under Northwest Coast influence. Later accounts reconstruct funeral-succession potlatches during the potlatch florescence, when they were held to mourn the dead, and to validate succession to the clan titles associated with resource locations. Gifts were given for witnessing events; and seating was according to rank reaffirming social status. While potlatching validated the right to hold titles to clan territory, it was where important decisions were announced, not made. Potatches were also held to name children, to announce divorce, to confirm shamans, to reconcile individuals, and for many other reasons.

Hudson's (1983) socio-economic study includes a description of Tl'azt'enne potlatch practices in the 1970s. He traces the change in land tenure from a pattern of clan control of resources to control by patrilocal trapping units. The economic functions of the potlatch changed from the delineation of clan land ownership through _deneza_ validation to one that links matrilineal units in reciprocal exchange. The manifest function of the potlatch is the same -- it is intimately tied to funerals.

Hudson (1983) and Kobrinsky (1977) show the importance of the Carrier potlatch for perpetuating Carrier identity, culture, and history. My own research indicates that the potlatch marks important rites of passage. One of its most important features is for paying for particular services rendered to the decedent and his clan and kin.

Government leaders are asking consultants and elders to examine the potlatch and describe its political functions; that is, how it governed in reference to the *deneza* and land tenure system. Many elders maintain that the potlatch was not the institution that took care of political matters in the manner suggested by elected leaders.

Many people think that as ceremonies connected with funerals and family, potlatches do not perform a function comparable to government. They are "apples and oranges," and should remain that way. To many, the potlatch is not a political forum but a sacred ceremony.

# Chapter 5 Implications for Self-government

In the preceding chapters I have pointed out the problems that the Carrier and Sekani have encountered when discussing and developing plans for self-government. Pointing out problems without offering suggestions for their resolution could be seen as hypercritical. As an academic exercise only, then, I will suggest an approach for Carrier-Sekani self-government that addresses some of the issues I have raised. This approach is based on the principles underlying clan organization and traditional values. I will also discuss the alternatives others have offered as options for self-government, and how these options apply to the Carrier-Sekani case. It is hoped that the insights provided will help minimize differences of opinion at both the grass roots and government levels. Before proceeding I will present one last problem -- the problem of modelling government based on the potlatch-clan system.

## Problems of Representation

Whether or not the Carrier choose clan government, potlatch government, or the addition of a hereditary chiefs' and elders' council to tribal level government, there are problems of representation using traditional structures. The clan system is not fully integrated in a regional form, as would be required for contemporary self-government modelling. Differences in integration result from geographical proximity to the Gitksan, fission and fusion of clans, and non-uniformity of naming practices. In the following discussion, I use the terms phratry and clan interchangeably, except in the cases of the Bulkley River and Babine Lake subtribes, whose phratries are divided into houses (clans).

Duff (1955:31) presents the Carrier clan system showing clan correspondence for a number of subtribes. I have adapted Duff's table, with Kobrinsky's (1973:90) changes, in Table 1. The clan structure is much more complex than the idealized version that appears in Table 1, and I will discuss some of the complexities.

Duff (1951:32) postulates the steps through which subtribes adopted phratries. Each local band adopted one Tsimshian phratry, adjacent groups taking different names. Phratric exogamy in a one-phratry group means local exogamy, and women marrying out gave their children their own phratric membership -- thus spreading the clan system throughout Carrier territory. Although some anthropologists have criticized Duff's hypothesis, it is corroborated by Kobrinsky (1977:58,129), who points out for the Babine case that privileges went to the Lasamasyu clan to honour them as the original clan. Table 2 shows the primordial clans reported for some Carrier subtribes.

Jenness (1943:480) proposes that the five clan system found among the Bulkley River Carrier was the result of interaction with the Kitimat Indians, (prior to Gitksan influence), because both were subdivided into five phratries, one of which was beaver. This structure does not appear elsewhere in British Columbia. Kobrinsky states that among the Babine, clans

Table 1 Distribution of Phratries Among Some Carrier Subtribes

| Subtribe | Phratry Distribution and Correspondence |
|---|---|
| Bulkley River | 1.Tamtanyu 2.Jilserhyu 3.Laksilyu 4.Lasamasyu + 5.Tsayu |
| Cheslatta | 1.Tamtanyu 2.Jilserhyu 5.Tsayu 6.Tsyaztotin |
| Fraser Lake | 1.Tamtanyu 2.Jilserhyu 3.Laksilyu (+6.Tsyaztotin) 4.Lasamasyu + 5.Tsayu |
| Fort Fraser | 1.Tamtanyu 2.Jilserhyu 3.Laksilyu (+6.Tsyaztotin) 4.Lasamasyu + 5.Tsayu |
| Stoney Creek | 2.Jilserhyu 3.Laksilyu (+ individuals of 1.Tamtanyu, 4.Lasamasyu + 5.Tsayu) |
| Nulki Lake | 2.Jilserhyu |
| Tachick Lake | 3.Laksilyu |

From Duff (1955:31) and Kobrinsky (1973:90).

**Table 2 Proposed Primordial Clans for Some Carrier Subtribes**

| Subtribe | Proposed Original Clan (Duff 1951:32) |
|---|---|
| Burns Lake | Laksilyu |
| Fraser Lake | Jilserhyu |
| Fort Fraser | Lasamasyu |
| Stoney Creek | |
| Tachik Lake | Laksilyu |
| Nulki Lake | Jilserhyu |
| | Proposed Original Clan (Kobrinsky 1977:58) |
| Babine Lake | Laxtcaemisyuw |

developed after the phratry system was in place. Jenness (1943:584) discusses the extent of the phratry-clan system:

> . . . the phratry-clan system of organization seems to have extended no farther inland than the Bulkley River and Babine Lake, the two districts that bordered on the territory of the Gitksan. Some Carrier subtribes to the eastward ranged themselves into phratries whose chiefs bore hereditary titles; and they even adopted crests for these phratries, or for the chiefs who presided over them. Nowhere . . . did they subdivide their phratries into definite clans . . . .

The Tannotenne at Prince George may never have had phratries at all. The Indians at Stuart Lake got them from association with the Babine (Jenness 1943:584).

Duff says that in two cases the local bands adopted the Carrier names Tsayu (beaver) and Tsuyaztotin (little spruce people) rather than Gitksan names. These two Carrier named clans were equated with Lasamasyu and Laksilyu respectively. The corresponding clans potlatched together, and were considered one group (Duff 1951:28). Kwunphotenne (people of the fireside) is an additional clan with a Carrier name although it is not mentioned by Duff.

Although some groups had members of six differently named phratries, they never formed six functioning groups. At Hawilgate (for a time) they formed five, at Fort Fraser, four, at Stony Creek two (Duff 1951:32). At Bulkley River, Babine Lake, Fraser Lake, and Stuart Lake the phratry had extensions in a number of villages, as they did at Endako and Cheslatta lakes, where there were also five phratries. At Stoney Creek the two clans operated at the local level. In 1977, the Fort Babines had three phratries. The Gitamtanyu disappeared sometime before that time. Kobrinsky (1977:151) points out that some people got together and attempted to rebuild it.

The working order of the phratry-clan system is not well understood, partly because of its lack of uniform diffusion. Not all clans were present in all villages. Table 3 shows how the clan system was diffused from Bulkley River (in the west), where it was fully integrated, to Stoney Creek (in the east). It also shows the Bulkley River phratry-clan system. This table (adapted from Steward) suggests that the Tum'tenyu were equated to Grand Trunk. Steward (1961:739) and subsequently Tobey (1981:419) are the only anthropologists who have equated these two clans. I suspect that in Steward's work Grand Trunk was meant to be a separate clan, not equated to Tum'tenyu, since it was not mentioned in the text.

**Table 3 The Diffusion of Clans from West to East**

| Bulkley River | | Babine Lake | Stuart Lake | | Stoney Creek |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Jenness) | | (Steward) | (Morice) | (Steward) | (Steward) |
| Phratries | Clans | | | | |
| **1.Gitamtanyu** | Grizzly House<br>Middle of Many<br>Anskaski | 1.Grand Trunk | 1.Tum'tenyu | | |
| **2.Gilserhyu** | Dark House<br>Thin House<br>Bark House | 2.Kwanpahoten | 2.Kwanpahotene | | |
| **3.Laksilyu** | Many Eyes House<br>Flat Rock House<br>Fireside House | 3.Lasilyu | 3.Yusilyu | 3.Lasilyu = Kwanpahoten Frog | 3.Lasilyu at Nulhkwiten |
| **4.Laksamshu** | Sun House<br>Twisted House<br>Owl House | 4.Lhtsumyshyu Frog | 4.Lhtsumyshyu | 4.Lhtsumulshu Owl = Tsayu at Trembler Lake | 4.Lhtsumulshu at Ta'chek-ten |
| **5.Tsayu** | Beaver | 5.Sayu | 5.Tsayu | | |

Adapted from Steward (1961:739).

Table 4 provides a summary of clans and cultural influences by subtribe; and indicates differences in phratric functions, exogamy, descent, geographical extension, integration, and basic social units. This table, which was adapted from Goldman (1941), also shows the bilateral Sekani and Alkatcho, who once followed, but have since forgotten or discarded clans. Goldman (1941:n.p.) shows that subtribes have been influenced by other Carrier groups, the Bulkley River and Sekani have been influenced by the Gitksan; and the Alkatcho Carrier have been influenced by the Salish and the Bella Coola.

**Table 4. Summary of Clans and Cultural Influences**

| | Bulkley River | Stuart Lake Fraser Lake | Endako Cheslatta | Stoney Creek | Sekani | Alkatcho Carrier |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sources of foreign influences | Gitksan<br>Kitimat | Bulkley<br>Babine Lake<br>Prince George | Fraser Lake | Fraser Lake<br>Probably Prince George | Gitksan<br>Carrier<br>N.E. Athapaskan | Upper Carrier<br>Salish<br>Bella Coola |
| Phratric or Clan names | Gitamtanyu<br>Gilserhyu<br>Laksamshu<br>Lakselyu<br>Tsayu | Tamtanyu<br>Gilserhyu<br>Tsamashu<br>Laksilyu<br>Tsayu | Tamtanyu<br>Yiselyu<br>Tsamashu<br>Tsoyeshotenne<br>Tsayu | Gilserhyu<br>Yusilyu | Lachsibu<br>Laksel<br>Lachsamshu | Tsayu<br>Raven<br>Grizzly Bear |
| Phratric functions | Economic<br>Ceremonial<br>Exogamy | Economic<br>Ceremonial<br>Exogamy | Economic<br>Ceremonial<br>Exogamy | Economic<br>Ceremonial<br>Exogamy | Ceremonial<br>Exogamy | Ceremonial<br>Economic<br>No exogamy |
| Exogamy | Rigid | Rigid | Rigid? | ? | Weak | None |
| Descent | Matrilineal | Matrilineal | Matrilineal | Matrilineal | Bilateral | Bilateral |
| Geographic extension | Over many villages | Over many villages | Over many villages | Local village group? | Non-localized | Local group in theory |
| Integration | Complete | Lacked Clans | Lacked Clans | Weak | Weak | Weak |
| Basic Social Units | Phratry over-rides clan | Phratry | Phratry | Phratry? | Individual family, bands | Closely related families |

Adapted from Goldman (1941:np).

Not all clans were uniformly named, creating problems in reconstructing their working relationship. As Tobey (1981:419) points out for the Carrier region, "the data are complex and in part conflicting, and the phratry names vary in the different groups and sources." Table 5 shows five Carrier clans and the alternate names used in the literature. Problematic is the fact that Kwunpahotenne is equated to three different clans, Grand Trunk perhaps to two clans, and Tsuyaztotin to two clans.

**Table 5. Alternate Names for Carrier Clans**

| Carrier Clans | Alternate Names Used |
|---|---|
| Clan 1 = Gitamtanyu, Tamtanyu | Kwanpahotenne, Grand Trunk |
| Clan 2 = Gilserhyu, Jilserhyu | Kwanpahotenne, Tso'yezhotenne and Tsuyaztotin |
| Clan 3 = Laksilyu, Yiselyu | Kwanpahotenne, Grand Trunk, Tso'yezhotenne, and Tsuyaztotin |
| Clan 4 = Laksamshu, Llsamashu, Lsamasyu | |
| Clan 5 = Tsayu | |

Jenness (1943), Duff (1951), Morice (1895:203), Tobey (1981:49).

Steward writes that the system

> became so simplified that Stuart Lake and Stoney Creek had only 2 main divisions and no subdivisions and that nominal equivalents from one locality to another became confused. In fact they became so confused that such names as Grand Trunk and Japan were adopted in certain localities. (Steward 1961:738)

The fact that some phratries used Gitksan names, some used Carrier names, others used English names, and some are referred to by crest name has confused the picture significantly.

Some clans have been equated with each other in different villages, but not with a "like" clan in another because all clans did not collaborate in potlatch in the same manner. As Duff points out:

> It would seem that Bulkley River was the only subtribe that ever had five separate phratric groups. Although other subtribes like Fort Fraser had individuals of all six

> phratries, they aligned themselves into only four groups, the "parties." At Stony Creek, where individuals of five phratries now live, the alignment is into two groups. (Duff 1951:32)

Although five (some say six) clans are present in the Carrier region, the Tsayu clan, cited usually as the fifth clan, works with Lasamasyu. Duff (1951:32) states:

> Yet they were never regarded as completely identical. At Hagwilget before 1865, for example, Tsayu formed a social group separate from Lsamasyu.

Kobrinsky explains further, pointing out that since the Tsayu clan was assimilated into the Lasamusyu (as a result of population loss during the 1865 smallpox epidemic), the Tsayu have held a dual status:

> Although, nominally, they remain a distinct phratry - - in fact they retain their own hunting grounds -- and are always cited [as a separate clan] when one asks . . . they are seated with the Laxc'aemisyuw [Lasamusyu] and receive their distribution at potlatch just as if they were a discrete Laxc'aemisyu house division. (Kobrinsky 1977:159)

The diminished Tsayu phratry was ritually reduced to a clan within another phratry (Kobrinsky 1973:154).

Innumerable problems are seen in the relationship between the Jilserhyu and the Lasilyu clans. Jenness (1943:483) states that when the Bulkley phratries potlatched with the Hazelton (Gitksan) Laxsel clan, they combine Lasilyu with Jilserhyu. Seemingly, the Lasamusyu clan was not equated to the Gitksan Laxsamillix Laxski' clan. The operation proposed by Jenness (1943:483) is shown in Table 6.

Kobrinsky (1973:150,154) claims that the Lasilyu clan and the Jilserhyu clan arose from the separation of a parent clan:

**Table 6 Comparison of Carrier and Gitksan Clan Systems**

| | Carrier<br>(Hawilgate) | Gitksan<br>(Hazelton) |
|---|---|---|
| Clan 1 | Gitamtanyu | Laxgibu (Wolf) |
| Clan 2 & 3 | Gilserhyu and Laksilyu | Laxse'l (Frog-Raven) |
| Clan 4 | Laksamshu | Gisra'ast (Fireweed) |
| Clan 5 | Tsayu | Laxsamillix Laxski' (Eagle) |

Jenness 1943:483.

> Jihc'exiyuw and Laxselyuw arose sometime ago by the division of a single parent group. An informant explained that they are now "two places" but had come "from one place." They had separated because "both too much money. Got it from selling beaver to Hudson's Bay." (Kobrinsky 1973:150)

These two clans are described by Kobrinsky's informants as "cousins." (Kobrinsky 1973:150) Since that time, a number of synonyms have been used in association with these two clans. Kobrinsky claims that when the two separated, they retained their original house names as phratry names. (Cf. Lasilyu and Jilserhyu clans and synonyms and working arrangements in Appendix 1.) Kobrinsky (1973:91) writes:

> The ceremonial combining of phratries poses fascinating questions which I can do little more than raise here . . . . Why combine phratries in the first place? Jenness (1943:485) reports that the ca yuw joined the laxc'aemusyuw after have been seriously reduced by small pox (*circa* 1865). My own informants . . . strongly implies that the laxselyuw and the jilhc'exyuw arose from a single phratry . . . which had acquired "too much money." In general, the combining of phratries seems to reflect the desire to establish and maintain an overall ceremonial structure centered around a set of counterposed superordinate units

(phratries and combination of phratries) of roughly equivalent ritual power.

## Current Carrier Clans and Self-government Modelling

Table 7 details the current Carrier clans reported for various subtribal groups. Names still vary between clans, making a regional correlation difficult. What is clear is that inequality still exists in the number of clans in each village. While Table 7 shows two or four clans present, the data may be deceptive, because what is not obvious is the working relationship between the clans at intravillage and intervillage levels.

Using the Nak'azdli Band as a local case study , I show in Appendix 1, Table 16 that Morice in 1893 reported 4 clans; Steward in 1941 was adamant that there were only two clans; Walker in 1974 reported 3 clans and another that he did not identify; and I found that there were 3 or 4 clans depending on how I asked questions. While Clan 1, the Lohjubu clan, is present at potlatches, it is considered to be a clan from Takla Lake, not indigenous to Nak'azdli. Some Nak'azdli elders are blocking a move to have this clan fully recognized as a Nak'azdli clan. Other informants give the Lohjubu at Nak'azdli clan status in its own right.

The picture at Nak'azdli is further complicated by the fact that Kwunphotenne and Lasamusyu clans sit together at potlatch, although they are separate clans. In Appendix 2, Figure 13, we see that a three-sided potlatch seating structure exists (although the three indigenous clans do not each have a wall,

**Table 7 Current Carrier Clans and Associated Crests**

| Carrier Band | Clans | Crests |
|---|---|---|
| Broman Lake | Likhjibu<br>Liksa Mis Yu<br>Likseelyu | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf<br>Grouse, Killerwhale<br>Caribou |
| Burns Lake | Likhjibu<br>Likh Tsa Mis Yu<br>Jilh Tse'e Yu<br>Gil Lanten | Black Bear<br>Beaver<br>Frog<br>Caribou, Mountain, Canadian Flag |
| Stoney Creek | Dulkw'ah/Tsasdli<br>Grand Trunk | Frog<br>Caribou |
| Stellaquo | Dumdenyoo<br>Tsumusyoo<br>Dulthts'ehyoo<br>Luksilyoo | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf<br>Beaver<br>Frog, Crane<br>Caribou |
| Nautley | Dumdenyoo<br>Tsumusyoo<br>Dulthts'ehyoo<br>Luksilyoo | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf<br>Owl, Grouse<br>Frog, Crane<br>Caribou |
| Cheslatta | Tsa Yu<br>Lhtse yu | Beaver, Owl<br>Frog |
| Nak'azdli | Lohjuboo<br>Lhtu'umusyoo<br>Lisilyoo<br>Qwunbawhut'enne | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf<br>Beaver, Owl<br>Frog, Grouse<br>Caribou |
| Tl'azt'enne | Loh ji boo<br>Lthu'umusyoo<br>Lisilyoo<br>Qwunbawhut'enne | Bear, Wolf<br>Beaver, Owl<br>Frog, Grouse<br>Caribou |
| Takla Lake | Likh ji boo<br>Likh Tsa'a Mis Yu<br>Jilh Tse'e yu<br>Gil lanten | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Fox, Wolf<br>Beaver, Grouse, Moose, Oars<br>Frog, Groundhog<br>Caribou |
| Lake Babine | Lakh ji bu<br>Likh Tsa Mis Yu<br>Jilh Tse'e yu<br>Gil lan ten | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Timberwolf<br>Beaver, Owl, Owl/Sun, Grouse, Moose, Pale Grizzly<br>Frog, Marten, Thunderbird<br>Mountain/Canadian Flag, Caribou |

Information from Poirier (1990).

the *Lohjibu* occupying the position near the door). Further, this arrangement changes as one clan occupies the centre as host clan. A specific problem for self-government modelling at Nak'azdli would be whether or not the *Lohjibu* clan would be represented in Nak'azdli government, or with the Takla group. Likewise, Table 7 lists 4 clans for the Tl'azt'enne (*Lohjibu*, *Lasamasyu*, *Lasilyu*, and *Kwunphotenne*). The number of clans listed differs from the data provided by Hudson (1983:190), who says that there were 3 clans (Grand Trunk, *Lasilyu*, *Lasamasyu*); and specifies that *Lohjibu*, from Takla, works together with *Lasilyu*. Would *Lohjibu* want its own representation, or would it be satisfied to be represented with *Lasilyu*?

Kobrinsky (1973:91) writes of the phratries:

> Four balances and counterposed blots constitute an *ideal* ceremonial structure, this, in turn, would appear to carry the image of a complete and balanced terrestrial world. . . . (1973:92)
>
> Nowhere are these collapsed to five or to three ceremonial units instead of to four units (and in the case of Stoney Creek, to two). (Kobrinsky 1973:91)

A situation where two units are preferred to three or five conflicts with the data presented by Hudson and myself. Clearly, the picture is far more complicated than that expressed by Kobrinsky for Babine Lake. Three working clans is indeed an operating Carrier structure.

As well as inequality in number of clans, and clan collaboration, there are problems with residency. Some people are official band members of one reserve, but hold a hereditary name belonging to a clan in a different village. In a hereditary system, would they officially represent a community in which they do not live? Would they lose input and representation in community matters that directly affect them? This scenario applies to members who have moved from their natal villages, and belong to a different official band although they are members of a clan elsewhere.

Some people are also "double-headers," belonging to two clans at once. How would this situation be accounted for in self-government modelling? The Tl'azt'enne Nation is one band that represents four villages. Would each village want separate representation? If each of the clans sent a spokesperson to the Elders' and Hereditary Chiefs' Council, would this move be seen as inproportional representation? These problems also apply to a model for self-government based on clans. Further, how would clans like Tsayu and Lasamusyu, be represented in government? For example, would the Tsayu and Lasamusyu clans want their own representation, or would they be satisfied to remain with their working counterparts?

In Table 8, in order to make sense of the Carrier clan system, I propose a hypothetical regional correlation between differently named clans based on their crests. This method emphasizes the similarities in the cross-cutting clan system, and clears up the confusion arising from heterogeneous clan names. Kobrinsky supports cross-matching of crest divisions:

> These equations . . . are not arbitrary, but correlate with the principal crests in each phratry. However, the correlated crests are not always *prima facie* the same, and secondary crests . . . are brought into the computations,

## Table 8 Carrier Clans Characterized by Crest

Clan 1

| Broman Lake | Burns Lake | Nak'azdli | Tl'azt'en | Takla Lake | Lake Babine | Stellaquo | Nautley | Cheslatta | Stoney Creek |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bear<br>Grizzly<br>Wolf | Bear | Bear<br>Grizzly<br>Wolf | Bear<br>Wolf | Bear<br>Grizzly<br>Wolf | Bear<br>Grizzly<br>Timberwolf | Bear<br>Grizzly<br>Wolf | Bear<br>Grizzly<br>Wolf | | |
| Likhjibu | Likhjibu | Lohjuboo | Loh ji boo | Likh ji boo | Lakh ji bu | Dumdenyoo | Dumdenyoo | | |

Clan 2

| Broman Lake | Burns Lake | Nak'azdli | Tl'azt'en | Takla Lake | Lake Babine | Stellaquo | Nautley | Cheslatta | Stoney Creek |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frog | Frog<br>Grouse | Frog<br>Grouse | Frog | Frog<br>Groundhog<br>Marten<br>Thunderbird | Frog<br>Crane | Frog<br>Crane | Frog | Frog |
| | Jilhtse'e yu | Lisilyoo | Lisilyoo | Jilh Tse'e yu | Jilh Tse'e yu | Dulth - tse'ehyoo | Dulth-tse'ehyoo | Lhtse yu | Dulkw'ah/Tsasdli |

Clan 3

| Broman Lake | Burns Lake | Nak'azdli | Tl'azt'en | Takla Lake | Lake Babine | Stellaquo | Nautley | Cheslatta | Stoney Creek |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caribou | Caribou<br>Mountain<br>Canadian Flag | Caribou | Caribou | Caribou | Caribou<br>Mountain<br>Canadian Flag | Caribou | Caribou | | Caribou |
| Likseelyu | Gil Lanten | Quawnba-whut'enne | Quawnba-whut'enne | Gil lanten | Gil lan ten | Luksilyoo | Luksilyu | | Grand Trunk |

Clan 4

| Broman Lake | Burns Lake | Nak'azdli | Tl'azt'en | Takla Lake | Lake Babine | Stellaquo | Nautley | Cheslatta | Stoney Creek |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grouse<br>K. Whale | Beaver | Beaver<br>Owl | Beaver<br>Owl | Beaver<br>Grouse<br>Moose<br>Oars | Beaver<br>Owl, Owl/Sun<br>Grouse<br>Moose<br>Pale Grizzly | Beaver | Owl<br>Grouse | Beaver<br>Owl | |
| Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Likh Tsa Mis Yoo | Lthu'mus-yoo | Likh Tsa'a Mis Yu | Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Tsumusyoo | Tsumusyoo | Tsumusyoo | Tsayu | |

Information from Poirier (1990).

> pushing the frontier of the enquiry to the question of what principles constrain the concatenation [linking] of the crests internal to a given division. (Kobrinsky 1973:95)

My correlation, in its defense, seems to be fairly consistent with the historical data presented in Tables 10 through 17 in Appendix 1. The only problem with this correlation is the relationship between Clans 2 and 3, of the Nak'azdli and Tl'azt'enne bands, which may have been created by the original split of the Lasilyu and Jilserhyu phratries. At Nautley, for example, would the Nak'azdli Lasilyu/Frogs associate with the Dulth tse'ehyu/Frogs, or would they sit with the Lasilyu/Caribou?

As I also pointed out, some clans worked in conjunction at the local level, in an attempt to equalize relative clan strength. When elders seat these individuals at an intervillage potlatch, I do not know if they preserve the local working relationship, or if they seat according to regional clan counterpart. Further research is needed to determine how regional seating works.

Even if the working relationship between phratries could be calculated for the regional level, the problem of inequality of representation and membership would still have to be worked out. The clans are not equally populated at either the local or regional levels. The problem in one particular village is addressed by a Nak'azdli elder:

> When we think about it now who is going to have the power? We have four clans. One could have very small membership. Even right here within our own village here we have Grand Trunk, they are very small. Okay, how much power are they going to have when it comes to voting rights? And what about Lasilyu? They are a pretty powerful clan. What's

> going to happen there? If we're going to use the bat'ats system, for the administration of self-government, then we're going to have to restructure the whole thing. We're not going to take away from the clan system. We're going to have to add to it from the government system. That's the only way it is going to work. We have azah people, aza'ne. How many is there in each clan? We have to devise that before we start doing something that will change the structure of our whole culture. I wouldn't want to see that.

This problem is illustrated in Table 9, which provides a summary of the number of hereditary chiefs, vacant hereditary seats, elders, and active members in the potlatch, by phratry for several Carrier subtribes (calculated from Poirier 1990). Inequalities are apparent: the Lasamasyu clan at Lake Babine has 21 individuals holding hereditary titles; the same clan at Takla Lake has 11; but Burns Lake and Cheslatta report no hereditary chiefs for this clan. There is a similar problem with the number of elders in each clan within and between villages.

In any government structure using the potlatch as its basis, the issue of seating practices arises; that is, a few people think that in government, clans should sit in their respective potlatch positions. Hereditary chiefs should be seated according to rank.

Figures 8 to 16 in Appendix 2 show the relative position of each of the clans in the potlatch hall. Figure 7 shows that while there is correlation for at least four villages, overall there is great variability in potlatch seating; a single seating plan does not exist for the Carrier as a whole. As Jenness states:

> We are not unfamiliar, in our own society, with the serious disputes that have resulted in the course of state

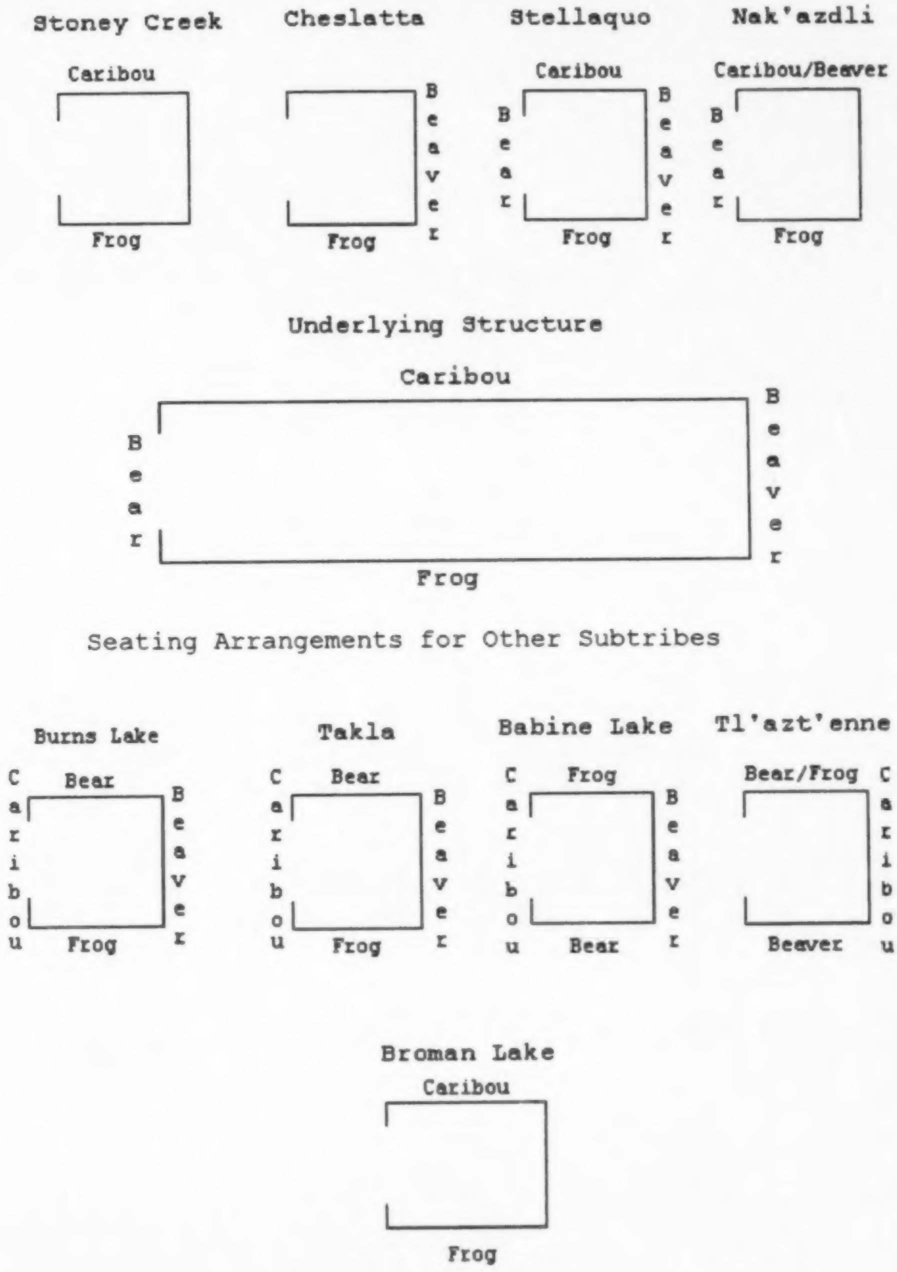
Table 9 Number of Potlatch Participants for Some Subtribes

| Subtribe | Broman Lake | Burns Lake | Nak'azdli | Tl'azt'enne | Takla Lake | Lake Babine | Stellaquo | Nautley | Cheslatta | Stoney Creek | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clan 1 | Likhjibu | Likhjibu | Lohjuboo | Loh ji boo | Likh ji boo | Lakh ji bu | Dumdenyoo | Dumdenyoo | | | |
| Hereditary Names | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 27 | 2 | 5 | | | 64 |
| Vacant Names | (5) | 0 | 0 | 0 | (2) | (10) | (2) | (4) | | | (21) |
| Elders | 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | ? | ? | ? | ? | | | 15? |
| Members | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | ? | ? | ? | ? | | | 7? |
| Totals | 12 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 22? | 27? | 5? | ? | | | 86? |
| Clan 2 | | Jilh ts'e yu | Lisilyoo | Lisilyoo | Jilh Tse'e yu | Jilh Tse'e yu | Dulth-ts'ehyoo | Dulth-ts'ehyoo | Lhtse yu | Dulkw'ah-Tsasdli | |
| Hereditary Names | | 0 | 1 | 7 | 15 | 24 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 69 |
| Vacant Names | | (2) | (3) | 0 | (1) | (5) | (3) | (4) | (3) | (3) | (24) |
| Elders | | 4 | 39 | 14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 10 | 17 | 84? |
| Members | | 8 | 37 | 8 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 36<br>22 Y | 15 | 126? |
| Totals | | 12 | 77 | 29 | 15? | 24? | 11? | 8? | 68 | 35 | 279? |
| Clan 3 | Likselyu | Gil Lanten | Quawnba-whut'enne | Quawnba-whut'enne | Gil lanten | Gil lan ten | Luksilyoo | Luksilyu | | Grand Trunk | |
| Hereditary Names | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 21 | 15 | 4 | | 2 | 43 |
| Vacant Names | (2) | (1) | (3) | (2) | (2) | (14) | (3) | ? | | (3) | (30?) |
| Elders | 1 | 0 | 9 | 12 | ? | ? | ? | ? | | 6 | 28? |
| Members | 0 | 4 | 3 | 8 | ? | ? | ? | ? | | 11 | 26? |
| Totals | 1 | 4 | 12 | 21 | 0? | 21? | 15? | 4? | | 19 | 97? |
| Clan 4 | Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Likh Tsa Mis Yoo | Lthu'mus-yoo | Lthu'mus-yoo | Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Tsumusyoo | Tsumusyoo | Tsayu | | |
| Hereditary Names | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 21 | 1 | 5 | 0 | | 44 |
| Vacant Names | 0 | (1) | (5) | (1) | 0 | (16) | (1) | (4) | (1) | | (29) |
| Elders | 0 | 1 | 28 | 14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 5 | | 48? |
| Members | 3 | 8 | 16 | 7 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 16<br>13 Y | | 63? |
| Totals | 4 | 9 | 46 | 24 | 11? | 21? | 1? | 5? | 34 | | 155? |

() = Not Calculated in Clan Totals Y = Youth Members

Calculated from Poirier (1990).

Figure 7 Similarity of Subtribe Seating


Stoney Creek
Caribou
Frog
Cheslatta
Beaver
Frog
Stellaquo
Caribou
Bear
Beaver
Frog
Nak'azdli
Caribou/Beaver
Bear
Frog
Underlying Structure
Caribou
Bear
Beaver
Frog
Seating Arrangements for Other Subtribes
Burns Lake
Bear
Caribou
Beaver
Frog
Takla
Bear
Caribou
Beaver
Frog
Babine Lake
Frog
Caribou
Beaver
Bear
Tl'azt'enne
Bear/Frog
Caribou
Beaver
Broman Lake
Caribou
Frog

Data from Poirier (1990).

> functions. . . . among the Bulkley Carrier similar quarrels arose over the order of seating at feasts and ceremonials, for this order was liable to change from one generation to another.

Nak'azdli informants claim the arrangement of the clans changes from potlatch to potlatch, making the blueprinting of clan and individual seating a poor representation of the potlatch. The potlatch is dynamic. As Kobrinsky (1973:129) points out for the Babine case:

> The specific wall . . . to which a given phratry is assigned is a matter of convention. . . . In addition, I have recorded several versions of the specific assignments, . . . these, of course, indicate certain variations according to which phratry is host of the event. However, there are many apparent contradictions beyond these expected variations, and I regret that I am presently unable to define the underlying principles. One suspects in fact that these contradictions reflect -- at least in part -- conventionalized permutations whereby the phratries assume particular walls on the occasion according to which ones contain the father and the spouse respectively of the central celebrant.

Kobrinsky (1973:58) also provided a principle to examine when he stated that the original clan of Lake Babine had:

> . . . the privilege of sitting along the back wall [of the potlatch hall], the place of honor during potlatches, unless as hosts, they assume the center floor, this privilege is said to be in recognition of their having been the original phratry of the sept. (Kobrinsky 1973:58)

The present potlatch schematics (shown in Figures 8, 10, and 14 in Appendix 2) do not place the primordial Carrier clans for other Carrier subtribes, as reported by Duff, along the back wall of the potlatch hall.

Figures 8 to 16 in Appendix 2 also show how individuals are seated in relation to one another. Generally, named individuals sit in the centre of the clan; but there is variation according to village. For example, at Stoney Creek, elders tend to sit at the ends of potlatch rows, while active members are interspersed between hereditary chiefs; at Nak'azdli, active members sit at the front of the clan, while elders sit in the back row; at Cheslatta the youths are given the front row, with active members separating them from the elders and hereditary chiefs. If a potlatch seating structure was adopted for government, which one would it be? How would it be standardized, especially in light of the diplomatic implications of mis-seating someone?

A further problem in modelling government is presented by the Sekani, who do not potlatch, and the Lheit-lit'enne, who do not remember their clan system. How would they be represented in potlatch government? What is more important, would the Carrier people be willing to alter their present system of government and their ceremonial structure to provide for self-government modelling?

## Options for Self-Government

Long, in his study of the Blood and Peigan reserves, comments on the striking difference between traditional leadership selection and how it occurs under the Band system of government. Long claims that in Blood and Peigan societies dissatisfaction with native government over policies and decisions, and the beliefs in the powerlessness of these structures "constitute evidence that the legitimacy of the present decision-making process is still not fully recognized by a large number of tribal members as representing and serving the community" (Long 1990:769). The use of the extended kin group, says Long, "signals that the individual-based norm of representation underlying the band council elective system has never fully taken hold" (Long 1990:762).

> In traditional plains Indian societies the clan was the basic political group within which leadership selection occurred. In contemporary plains Indian political societies, however, the clan performs a function analogous to the screening/sponsoring mechanisms that exist in non-partisan municipal elections. Extended kin groups on the Blood and Peigan reserves run slates of candidates during each election. Sponsorship of candidates usually occurs in informal kin group caucuses, where decisions are made as to who should run council or the chieftainship. (Long 1990:261)

Long (1990:770) states that the Blood and Peigan Indians have not institutionalized *Indian Act* government because political solidarity for the structure does not exist; kinship and group interest still play a role in leadership selection, decision making, and in the administrative processes; and politics is not secularized. Plains groups still have a strong traditional orientation although its expression varies from traditional forms. All these factors allow for the opportunity "to restructure political recruitment and the decision-making process to bring them more into conformity with traditional practices."

Long points out two options available to Indian leaders in their search for meaningful self-government that reflects traditional practices. Option 1, which is neither realistic nor possible, is the substitution of traditional practices for the current externally-imposed structures. According to Long (1990:771), the extended kin group might be an effective administrative unit, but probably could not serve as an effective decision-making unit; the band is the most effective policy-making unit. Option 2, the melding of the present form of government with traditional practices, although more limited, "is more realistic and holds greater potential for being accomplished" (Long 1990:771).

Long says there is a need for creative innovation when blending traditional practices with present governments. He suggests:

1. The establishment of a ward system, permissible under the *Indian Act*.

> Moreover, a carefully designed ward system would be compatible with traditional kinship selection and representative practices. Such a ward system could have the effect of guaranteeing representation of the various kin groups in the political decision-making process. It could also restore the clan as the basic organizational unit for leadership selection and thus reintroduce merit principle into the political recruitment process. A representational system grounded in the extended kin group system would probably be one of the easier structural reforms to initiate because it corresponds closely with the segmentary tendencies of the respective tribal societies. (Long 1990:772-773)

2. The development of an Elders' Council where:

> . . . tribal leaders could establish advisory or consultative structures that reflect their traditional philosophies and values without disrupting the institutional arrangements of contemporary Indian governments. Developing a Council of Elders, for example, to advise the band council could regularize a process of bringing additional wisdom and experience into the decision-making process while at the same time preserving an important cultural tradition. Such a complementary political structure could also help to restore a degree of consensual decision-making by bringing more tribal members into the decision-making process. An additional benefit of such an arrangement would be the integration of traditional spiritualism with tribal decision-making. Elders are the spiritual leaders of their peoples and their presence in Indian governments would guarantee the strengthening and

> preservation of an extremely important aspect of their traditional belief system. (Long 1990:773)

Long (1990:773) feels that although band government is rooted in Euro-Canadian ideals, government that partially reflects Indian values is likely to help "engender the loyalty and support of Indian peoples, an essential ingredient of effective government."

## The Carrier-Sekani and Their Options

The Carrier, like the Blood and Peigan Indians, have not accepted *Indian Act* government as their own. The Carrier are dissatisfied with their government, and believe them powerless to serve their needs. Many people reject secularized politics. Traditional Carrier society, like the Blood and Peigan, was based on clans. During the two elections that occurred during my fieldwork (one at Nak'azdli in 1991 and one with the Fort George Indian Band in 1988), I observed that kinship plays a large part in the selection of who will run for office. Factionalism tends to run along family lines.

An inherent contradiction exists in the Carrier case because most people want government based on traditional practices but are not willing to compromise these traditions by using them for self-government modelling. As Cassidy (1988b:4-5) writes:

> The people, to an overwhelming degree, want potlatch government, but they are hesitant. They want to go forward, but to go carefully. 'The Bat'lats is Indian business,' they say. It must not be spoiled. It cannot be mixed with other business.'

This sentiment caused Cassidy to recommend the addition of an Elders' and Hereditary Chiefs' Council (analogous to the Elders' Council, proposed by Long). As I pointed out in Chapter 3, the proposed addition of an Elders' and Hereditary Chiefs' Council at the Tribal level has created innumerable problems -- the most important is that many people do not recognize the power and authority of hereditary chiefs.

Rather than engendering "loyalty and support" in combining Euro-Canadian and Native ways (Long 1990:773), the Carrier for the most part stand in opposition to potlatch government and to an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council because (as Boldt and Long pointed out themselves) self-government modelling threatens the Indian values that the elders seek to preserve. In the Carrier case, adding an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council at the tribal level is no less an "alien authority structure," which "constitutes a break with traditional indigenous principles" (Boldt and Long 1985:342). It is a bizarre construct.

At the Special Assembly in Burns Lake in 1991, it appeared that the CSTC was looking at increasing the complexity of representation within the council. It was suggested that four councils be formed: 1) Elders' Council, 2) Azah Council, the 3) Elected Chiefs' council, 4) Tribal Council. While Long (1990:773) says that the addition of councils brings more people into the decision-making process, the population of the Carrier-Sekani member bands is less than 13,000 people. For a population the size of a small town, this level of complexity adds to a structure which many government chiefs and other Indian people claim is already overly elaborate.

The Carrier-Sekani have the opportunity to devise a totally new form of government. The addition of an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council to an organization which many people now feel does not meet their needs, is a "quick fix" and does not do justice to the wide array of possibilities available to them using their traditional structures. It may be just as disruptive as completely redesigning government.

The Carrier people do not want DIA government. They do not want potlatch government or rule by hereditary chiefs. They do want government based on traditional values, customs, and practices. The term "potlatch government" has never been clearly defined. When referring to it, three different types of translation come to mind: 1) government using the potlatch as its basis; 2) rule by hereditary chiefs; 3) government using tradition as its basis. The first and second interpretations have met with strong opposition. The third option has not. What in Carrier tradition, then, may be used without corrupting and threatening the traditional ways? What level and type of organization reflects the "more or less continuous coordination of group action" (Cornell 1988:28-29)? For the Carrier this is the clan.

As I pointed out earlier, the clan was the unit that traditionally cooperated in ceremony and in economic and social matters. The matrilineal clan system and potlatching underlie Carrier identity, and maintain the distinction between Native and non-native ways. The clan perpetuates Carrier culture and values. For these reasons it is the traditional unit that lends itself to modelling, and it is a better starting place for government rooted in tradition than constructs such as the DIA band and the tribal nation. Through the cross-cutting matrilineal kinship system, different villages are united and "entire families, clans, nations or peoples" are joined (Barsh 1986:188-189). Although trapping is controlled by families, the matrilineal-clan system cross-cuts independent trapping units.

> The contemporary state-system is defined geographically, and it matters little who is found within states' territorial jurisdiction. By comparison, the tribal system rests on universal kinship - kinship that is continuous in time, space, and across species . . . and uniquely defines each individual in relation to every other. Like a woven fabric, kinship draws its strength from cross-cutting strands. (Barsh 1986:187)

I believe that Long's suggestion of a ward system that restores the clan as unit for leadership selection might be a more appropriate structure than the addition of an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council added to tribal level government.

## Differentiating Potlatch Function and Structure

Using the clan system as a unit for leadership selection in government would be a new construct. It would not be potlatch government because it would not be based on the ceremonial practice of repayment for services and for witnessing between clans. It would not involve the hereditary chief system nor land tenure (which would remain potlatch business). Clan government would not involve potlatch seating practices in light of the complexity and diplomatic problems in creating uniformity.

Seating would probably best be suited to the present assembly style. Respecting the wishes of the people, the potlatch and government would be kept separate; and in this way, the traditional ways would not be diluted or corrupted. The new construct, clan government, could perpetuate the duality that already exists between the hereditary potlatch system and government (although the clans would be active in both). Clan government could accentuate Carrier identity rather than undermine it; clan membership could become a part of everyday political life rather than something that is recalled only when someone dies.

Government leaders must recognize, that whatever the form, the Carrier-Sekani are constructing a government. Leaders must recognize this situation; and educate hereditary chiefs, elders, government leaders, and grass root members. Perhaps, through the process of education and communication, consensus could be reached on some issues. For example, native politicians must explain that a new or altered form of organization has to be designed; and a new name (perhaps Dakelhne government) is necessary to describe this configuration. While the name and structure are constructs, drawn from tradition, they are valid in their own right.

Hudson (1983:49) has pointed out "someone from the village of Tachie was: one, a Carrier, two, a Tl'azt'enne, and three, a Tachiewoten." I might add one is also is member of a clan, a Lasilyu frog, or a Lasamasyu owl, in addition to those categories outlined by Hudson. Carrier government should reflect these levels of identification -- the clan, the village, and the larger nation.

## The Carrier Clan System and Government

Using the clan system as a basis for government could involve the following structure. Each clan at the village level might consider electing or appointing a representative from their clan to sit on a village council (Nak'azdli Village Council). This scheme means that for a small village the maximum number of clan representatives on Council will equal four (if all clans are present there). For bands with a larger population, a system of representation based on population may have to be worked out; or perhaps clans could be equal in representation.

In those villages where not all clans are represented, the village council would be composed of members of those clans present. Some villages, then, may have three members on the village council. This in no way affects representation, because each clan has its say over local matters and the fourth clan is unnecessary. Council decisions could be by consensus or majority rule. Consensus, or unanimous decision-making, would not only be more in line with the way decisions were made in the past, but would ensure that a village council was not controlled through clan alliances. It would be more representative than majority rule.

The minimum number of chief and council members under the band system of government is three. If all clans were present in the village, the most small bands would gain is an additional representative at the village level. Larger Bands could be reduced from the equivalent of one chief and 12 Council members to a number that is much more manageable. This representation could be worked out in a formula.

The village council could simply replace the current chief and council. It would be responsible for making decisions that affect the entire band. The council would receive funding for village level administration and programs until a land claim settlement was reached, or an economic base for self-government was developed.

Hereditary chiefs might form an important part of the government system in that, as in the past, they might informally guide, persuade, and give counsel to the clans. If the clan chose do so, it could elect or appointed a hereditary chief to office; but being a hereditary chief in potlatch would not in and of itself guarantee an appointment. "An out" would also be provided to hereditary chiefs who are unwilling to, or incapable of, governing. The role of hereditary chiefs in the potlatch and rank system will remain as it is at present. Similarly, if the clan felt that either an elder or an experienced government chief would be the most appropriate person to represent the clan, they too, could be selected. A merit-based system would be in keeping with Indian ideals and new beliefs in universal eligibility for office.

Through a clan government system, each clan in each village would be represented; and would have lobbying power and control in matters that directly affecting that clan's affairs (to lobby for educational funds for members, to document important historical and cultural information, to determine clan membership). It would be up to the clans to ensure that their spokesperson represents their interests. How such matters would be dealt with would be up to the clans to decide. This sort of system would allow for flexibility; and, perhaps, would be more in keeping with informal ways of conducting business. Government would not have to be as uniform, homogenized, or fossilized as it would be using other systems.

While it may be argued that clan government will increase factionalism within the clans, it would allow each clan to work out its disputes in private and to present a unified front. Further, because members of nuclear and extended families belong to different clans, they would have input into more than one clan's business. This factor would have the potential to decrease the influence of powerful family blocks. This type of governmental structure could alleviate some factionalism that occurs between different families and clans. Each clan government could be as formal or as casual as the clan decides to make it. It could be based on voting by ballot, by a show of hands, or consultation and consensus.

At an agreed-upon interval, the clan could have a gathering (All Lasilyu Clan Gathering) at which village level members unite with members of the same clan from all villages. At that time, they could nominate and select or elect a regional clan leader. The regional leaders could then form a regional council based on the clans. There could be up to six representatives on the regional government council. The fifth position could be held by a Carrier representing those who do not have a clan affiliation. One position could be held by a Sekani delegate.

The regional clan chiefs could operate as a council; or, if they chose to, could appoint or elect one spokesperson. A structure with one permanent spokesperson resembles a vertical authority structure, and should probably be avoided. Perhaps a regional leader who is most capable in a particular area could be the spokesperson when issues arise pertaining to his or her area of expertise. The role of village level government and regional level government would be separable along logical lines of jurisdiction. Avoiding having a single spokesperson (and having six representatives) would reduce the chances of creating choice political positions and a strong central power base to be fought over. It is in keeping with the need to develop a horizontal model for self-government.

Once a year the Carrier-Sekani people could have an annual general assembly at which regional leaders could report on progress, exchange ideas, and receive input from all members in all regions.

## Dispute Resolution

Having to have a unanimous vote at any level of council leads to the problem of unresolved disputes, and carries with it the time-consuming process of consensus, which could hamper "getting business done." I must admit that I am at a loss to provide a structural solution to dispute resolution, and the problems that have been created by the failure to reach consensus. Letting the clans sort this out for themselves, using mechanisms that they use in non-political life, might be a preferred method. A more formal structure could be implemented when government issues are stalemated. For example, as a last resort, government leaders could opt for a referendum vote when issues cannot be resolved between clan representatives. An arbitration board could be formed to resolve disputes; but an arbitration board implies judgement, involves externally-imposed decisions, and implies that people outside the dispute are entitled to become involved in the affairs of others. Arbitration boards do not fit in with the traditional Indian ways of resolving disputes, and I wonder how effective they would be.

This process, too, might result in motions being passed that are ignored, because "real agreement" within the community does not exist. Leaders might still choose to go their own way rather than to compromise.

There are issues that should be either left alone or left up to the individual clan. At present, religious expression in Carrier communities is individualistic; maintaining the status quo could solve problems by allowing clans to choose representatives that reflect their views. The clans could decide informally the degree to which religion (or other issues) would be expressed through their choice of representatives. They could also informally use the language of their choice.

Regional government might consider incorporating diverse ways into government. For example, the Dene Nation has solved the problem of an official language by recognizing all languages (Asch 1991:pers. comm.). At meetings, simultaneous translation is provided for elders and others who do not understand the languages spoken. If funds could be solicited for equipment, Native volunteers or paid translators could provide this service for the Carrier and Sekani peoples.

Increasingly, elders maintain that other elders' observations are inaccurate or erroneous. Differences in opinion at the grass roots and government levels seem to be caused by either heterogeneity due to lack of uniform cultural practices, or to culture change. Creating uniformity in government, when there was never a single way of doing things, has created more disputes than it has resolved. That is why I suggest that it should be up to the clans to decide. But how could such a system be implemented?

## Membership and Implementation

The first step in implementing clan government would be to identify the clan membership in each Carrier community. Elders would have to play a large role in determining, through genealogical information, who belongs where. Ultimate membership in any clan would be determined by the local clan.

The clan system has always operated separately from the Department of Indian Affairs' membership codes. Clan membership overrides DIA classifications of on/off reserve, Bill C-31, and status/non-status Indians. At present, each band is attempting to develop its own membership code. Band codes have at their basis the notion of percentage of Carrier Indian blood and other criteria, such as whether one had relatives belonging to that particular band. This procedure, too, has caused dissention.

Clan membership, however, is ascriptive or based on merit principles. Non-Carriers who have been incorporated into clans are those who belong by virtue of the fact that they are accepted in the community. An excellent example is that of Pete E.L. Erickson, a Swede, who was made a deneza after he married Marian Prince of the Frog (Japan) clan at Nak'azdli. He was known for his charitable work during a major flu epidemic and for his generousity. Although his descendants were considered non-Native by the Department of Indian Affairs (later generations were Bill C-31), they belonged to the Indian community through the matrilineal system and their membership in the Frog clan. Traditional mechanisms for incorporating members could go a long way in setting up clan government.

Hudson (1983:198) describes what happens in the potlatch for cases where non-Carriers have married into the community:

> Most of the people marrying into one of the Tl'azt'en villages already have clan affiliation; those who do not are brought into one of the groups. An interesting example concerns a coastal woman who married into Portage, . . . . She was originally placed in [luchumushu] then transferred to lIsIlyu when someone in that clan died. Her daughter, married to her husband's brother's son, is also in lIsIlyu.

Hudson (1983:191) also discusses how an individual could be sponsored into another clan; and points out that there are "several examples of individuals switching to their father's clan, or in some cases, belonging to both the mother's and father's clan." Hudson (1983:191) notes that although there are few such "double-headers," clan shifts were not uncommon; and people were moved to father's or grandfather's clan. According to Hudson (1983:193), "if a woman transfers, her children retain the affiliation of her original clan." So although clan membership is traced through the matriline, it was possible to shift to another clan (Hudson 1983:191).

Hudson (1983:192) and Kobrinsky (1973:91) discuss the tendency toward equality in clan populations. Hudson writes:

> For the total Tl'azt'en population, the distribution of people in each clan is about one-third, although local groups vary in composition. For example, because Portage is basically a single extended family, most of the adult males are in one clan . . . derived from their mother. (Hudson 1983:191)

Kobrinsky (1973:91) proposes that the Carrier combine phratries to establish units of roughly equivalent ritual power. Hudson comments on the transfer of people between clans:

> I take such a transfer to be part of the aboriginal social system, and a necessary mechanism to overcome the problems of differential clan productivity (in terms of biological reproduction). It is not surprising that traditional concepts of exogamy and lineality break down when faced with the actual operation of Carrier 'clans'; it is, however, this very flexibility that allows the Carriers to reproduce a clan system. (Hudson 1983:192).
>
> The clans are not exogamous, although it was suggested that 'long ago' they were - along with those bilaterally related from a common grandfather in a category called snatneku, "my relatives". It was also suggested that although clan exogamy is not required, clan endogamy creates problems for potlatching because the husband and wife are in the same clan or society, or, as it was expressed: "Just one side all the time." Through potlatching, the distinctions between clans are reproduced and in an ideal representation of the structure, husband and wife are on different 'sides' . . . . (Hudson 1983:193)

The principles of clan transfer and the principle of exogamy and community acceptance into a clan could be useful. If a non-Carrier married into a village, it could be up to one of the local clans to determine if that individual should belong to that clan, and thus have input into the political process. If a non-Carrier man is to be incorporated into the clan system, he could be incorporated into his father-in-law's clan. Ideally, this procedure would place husband and wife in different clans. Because children follow their mother's clan, there is only a problem in determining clan membership if the in-marrying party is a non-Carrier woman (lacking clan affiliation). In these cases, if the woman is not adopted into a clan, it could be up to her husband's clan to decide whether the children should be bought back. Similarly, because all Carrier (and Sekani) villages are connected through kinship and marriage, clan membership could be determined, one way or another, for almost everyone. Although many members of the Lheit-lit'enne do not have Carrier ancestry on there mother's side, they do on their father's. All could be allocated to clans -- such is the flexibility of the Carrier clan system.

Another system could be devised for villages that do not have clans, nor want to use the clan system. They might develop representative councils based on family or faction, which could work with the clans at a regional level. Poirier's report (1990) lists the major (eight) families of the Mesilinka/Ingenika Sekani, and maps the territories controlled by these families. Sekani government could be based on these family units. As outlined above, a Sekani representative could be sent to the regional council. Some Northwest Coast groups have formed a clan in which all outsiders marrying in, and guests, are accommodated. The Carrier might consider this as another option.

I do not know how such plans would be received by traditionalists. While using the clan as the basis of government might revitalize the clan system and would certainly bolster clan populations, in the implementation stages of assigning clans, government business and potlatch business would overlap.

## Summary

In this chapter, I pointed out problems of representation that arise when using traditional structures that would make it difficult to model self-government. Geographical proximity to the Gitksan, fission and fusion of clans, the collaboration of clans, and the non-uniformity of naming practices has created a situation in which the working order of the clans is not well understood. The clan system was not fully integrated into a regional form, and does not provide a tidy package for modelling. How could the Carrier form traditional government when some of their own bands, and the Sekani people, do not potlatch? How would a power balance be maintained between large and small bands? Large and small clans?

In an attempt to sort out the working order of the clan system, I proposed a regional correlation between differently named clans based on their crests. This method emphasizes the similarities in a cross-cutting clan system, and I hope it clears up confusion arising from heterogeneous clan names. I showed that potlatch seating will be difficult to incorporate into government because there is not a single seating plan for the Carrier region as a whole, and the clans are arranged differently in each village according to event.

Using Long's (1990) criteria developed during a case study of the Blood and Peigan Indians, I found that the opportunity exists for restructuring government to bring it in line with Carrier traditional practices. Examining Long's options of a ward system and elders' council, I concluded that an elders' and hereditary chiefs' council should be rejected because many people do not accept their authority. Further, mixing potlatch business and government business is generally opposed. While Long claims the addition of councils brings more people into the decision-making process, it would add to bureaucracy. I suggested that Long's option of using a ward system based on clans would be more appropriate for the Carrier case, because the clan system cross-cuts different families and villages and has the potential to unite the Carrier regionally.

Through the flexible clan system, with its ability to move people from clan to clan, and to establish, through collaboration, units of roughly equivalent size, there is potential to equalize representation and to provide a place for everyone in the Carrier region. Clan membership, and clan collaboration, would be determined by elders and other influential clan members. This new construct, clan government, would initially involve potlatch business; but in the actual operation would maintain the distinction between the Carrier potlatch and politics.

# Chapter 6 Summary and Conclusions

## Summary

The federal government is pursuing the negotiation of self-government with Indian Bands across Canada through Constitutional reform; through legislative change outside of the *Indian Act;* and, in the case of B.C., through tripartite land claims negotiations. This process has been in response to the federal government's promise to negotiate the transfer of real power to aboriginal communities over matters that affect them. The government says that it is willing to negotiate any changes that Native groups put forward, provided that the arrangements made are suited to specific conditions of the communities involved. This thesis has traced the attempts by the Carrier-Sekani to develop a model for self-government specific to Carrier-Sekani customs, traditional practices, and institutions, especially those found in the potlatch.

In Chapter 2, I detailed the evolution of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council; and showed how, through the particular tribalization process, two levels of government, band level and tribal level, came to compete for control of regional government. There are two divergent opinions on its future organization. Band chiefs are putting forward sovereign nations as the proper authority in matters of regional government. Proponents of the Tribal Council are forwarding a plan in which the Tribal Council will remain a distinctive institution, outside the control of band chiefs, with hereditary chiefs forming the highest level of Carrier government. I also showed that such proposals, combined with the need to define and form self-government, has increased internal conflict at the government level. In the struggle for self-government, there are problems with defining the appropriate level because bands, tribal level government, and inter-tribal level government did not exist until recently. The Carrier and Sekani are having trouble defining the appropriate Carrier Nation.

In Chapter 3, I examined lines of opposition in the regional model formulation by pointing out the structural problems that are inherent in attempting to reconcile Euro-Canadian political structures and ideology with Carrier and Sekani values and institutions. The ideological trap of reinterpreting history and culture to conform to Western concepts of sovereign statehood has caused opposition. Pursuing the nature of the single traditional potlatch system in which deneza ruled authoritatively over their territories has created innumerable problems. Dissension results when some elders maintain that the aza'ne never had full authority or wielded full power. Many Carrier people, at least today, reject vertical authority structures and class designations. Many hereditary chiefs do not recognize the power of government leaders -- they do not want to dilute the traditional ways; and many government chiefs do not recognize hereditary chiefs.

Some leaders realize that the Carriers can never go back to the pure form of bat'lats because it can not address the needs and requirements of interaction with state society. Many leaders, recognizing that Indian people can never re-institute potlatch government of the past, call for a synthesis of the traditional ways with a Euro-Canadian governing system. The Carrier, historically, have maintained the distinction between the potlatch and government. Both have been allowed to operate in distinct spheres of influence. The elders do not want the potlatch and government mixed, but keeping the two separate opposes the tasks that leaders are faced with in devising models to present to the federal government that are based on traditional structures.

The Carrier still operate through the process of consensus; but diversity in beliefs, regional cultural differences, and time limitations have led government leaders to pass motions that are ignored. Subjective individualism, and a Carrier ethic of non-interference, has also caused some people to reject regional self-government modelling because of its homogenizing effects.

Government leaders seem to lack mechanisms to resolve the disputes that are arising because, among other things, of the different views on self-government. This impasse has caused a situation in which band-nations are breaking away from the Tribal Council.

Under the band system of government there is self-selection, which opposes indigenous methods of leadership selection. Some Carrier people are reluctant to part with the Department of Indian affairs because of the economic egotism of some leaders. Some bands and CSTC members suffer from an attitudinal dependence on the Department of Indian Affairs, or current Carrier government structures, or both. They are hesitant to change existing relationships.

In Chapter 4 I examined the structure and function of the Carrier potlatch as it is revealed in historical accounts. In order to explain the problems in translating this institution into government, I also discussed variations in potlatch practice for some Carrier groups.

I pointed out that potlatches were intimately associated with funerals. While once they were important to validate succession to clan titles associated with resource locations, the Carrier today use the potlatch primarily for funerals, and for repayment for services associated with funerals. Deneza still receive titles, but the titles are not necessarily tied to control over resource locations. Deneza remain ceremonially important.

Hudson (1983) and Kobrinsky (1977) show the importance of the potlatch for perpetuating Carrier culture and history. My own research indicates that the potlatch marks important rites of passage. Some Carrier people think that as ceremonies connected with funerals and family, potlatches do not perform a function comparable to government. Potlatches are where decisions are announced, not made. Potlatch government has been rejected by traditionalists because the present potlatch system perpetuates cultural identity and the distinction between the Native and non-Native way of doing things. Traditionalists do not want potlatch and government mixed. Many people think that the potlatch should not be turned into a political arena.

In Chapter 5, I showed how the collaboration of clans, non-uniformity of clan names, and the fission and fusion of clans, has created uncertainty in regional correlation. I proposed using clan crests, a regional correlation between differently named clans. This approach probably best serves as a model to be tested against actual working relationships. Heterogeneity in potlatch seating practices would make it difficult to implement a seating structure for government.

Using a model Long developed to test assimilation, I found that Carrier-Sekani government could be restructured along traditional lines, because the Carrier do not accept the present governing system and politics is still based on kinship. I suggested that representation could be based on the clan system, because of its flexibility and its cross-cutting characteristics.

## Conclusions

I hope I have shown, using the Carrier as a case study, the complexity of modelling self-government. This work should provide a point of departure for future research in this area. What becomes clear for the Carrier case is that detailed research needs to be conducted on the intricate workings of the clan system. What is clear, even using the information now available, is that clans provide a more appropriate unit for modelling self-government than does the potlatch ceremony. While it will be difficult to incorporate diverse Carrier and Sekani social organization into a government, it is not impossible. Recognizing the problems to be surmounted is a good start in approaching self-government knowledgeably and sensitively.

Clearly there are many basic problems associated with the formulation of self-government, even before one looks at larger issues such as negotiating self-government, having Indian government recognized in the Constitution, and providing land and money for self-sufficiency.

Although I have suggested a model for Carrier-Sekani government, the Carrier and Sekani are not limited in self-government options.

> . . . "existing aboriginal rights" refers to that "corpus of rights which derive from the fact that aboriginal peoples were present (dwelled) in Canada prior to the arrival of European colonists" . . . . (Asch 1984:8)

These rights, including the right to self-government, do not mean that natives must revert to the political organizations they had in the past. The Carrier and Sekani are under no obligation to base their governments on anything traditional if they choose not to do so. Aboriginal rights are applicable regardless of how Native peoples balance contemporary reality with their traditional ways. Traditional values and practices afford continuity and legitimacy, but past political systems were based on different social facts. If leaders want government based on tradition, they must find ways of doing so without jeopardizing values and beliefs that are held dear.

Non-native politicians must be sensitive, patient, and knowledgable in self-government matters, especially in the differences between Native and Western ideology and political systems.

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## Appendix 1 Clan Lists Reported for Some Carrier Subtribes

### Table 10 Clan Lists Reported for Stellaquo

| Recorded By: | Poirier | Duff | Goldman | Jenness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1951 | 1940 | 1935 |
| Clan 1 | *Dumdenyoo | Tamtanyu | Tamtanyu | Gitamtanyu |
| Crests | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf | | | |
| English | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | |
| Clan 2 | Dulthts'ehyoo | *Jilseryu | Gilserhyu | Gilseryu |
| Crests | Frog, Crane | ? | ? | |
| English | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | *Tso'yezhotenne |
| Clan 3 | Laksilyoo | **Tsuyaztotin | Laksilyu | Laksilyu |
| Crests | Caribou | ? | ? | |
| English | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | Laksilyu | | |
| Clan 4 | | ***Lasamasyu | Tsamashu | Laksamusyu |
| Crests | | | | |
| English | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | |
| Clan 5 | Tsumusyoo | ***Tsayu | Tsayu | Tsayu |
| Crests | Beaver | | | |
| English | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | |
| Explanations | *Floaters | *Most Important<br>**At Cheslatta<br>***Work together | | *West end of Fraser Lake |

Notes: Lhtsumushyu titles at Fraser Lake recent from Nak'azdli (Steward 1961).

Sources: Poirier (1990), Duff (1951:28-31), Jenness (1943:480, 482,483,584-586), Goldman (1941), Morice (1893:203-204).

**Table 11 Clan Lists Reported for Nautley**

| Recorded By: | Poirier | Duff | Goldman | Jenness | Jenness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1951 | 1940 | 1935 | 1935 |
| Clan 1<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Dumdenyoo<br>Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf | Tamtanyu | Tamtanyu | Gitamtanyu | Tamtanyu<br>Grizzly Bear, Black Bear, Weasel, & Leaf |
| Clan 2<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Dulthts'ehyoo<br>Frog, Crane | Jilseryu | Gilserhyu<br>? | *Gilseryu<br>*Tso'yez-hotenne | Gilserhyu<br>Big Frog, Crane, and Small Owl<br>? |
| Clan 3<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Luksilyoo<br>Caribou | *Laksilyu<br>?<br>*Tsuyaztotin | Laksilyu<br>? | Laksilyu | Laksilyu<br>Raven, Big Frog<br>? |
| Clan 4<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Tsumusyoo<br>Owl, Grouse | **Lasamasyu | Tsamashu | Laksamusyu | Llsamashu<br>Owl, Grouse, Whole Sun and Moon, and Half a Weasel |
| Clan 5<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | | **Tsayu | Tsayu | Tsayu | Tsayu<br>Beaver, Owl |
| Explanations | | *Work together<br>**Work together<br>Duff lists four clans, Tsuyaztotin is not one of them | | *West end of Fraser Lake = Tsoyex-hotenne | |

Sources: Poirier (1990), Duff (1951:28-31), Jenness (1943:480, 482,483,584-586), Goldman (1941).

**Table 12 Clan Lists Reported for Cheslatta**

| Recorded By: | Poirier | Duff | Goldman | Jenness | Jenness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1951 | 1940 | 1935 | 1935 |
| Clan 1 Crests English A.K.A. | | Tamtanyu | Tamtanyu | Gitamtanyu | Tantanyu<br>Grizzly Bear |
| Clan 2 Crests English A.K.A. | Lhtse yu<br>Frog | Jilseryu<br>? | Tsoyeshotenne<br>? | *Gilseryu<br>Tso'yez-hotenne | Tsu'yaz-tonne<br>Woodpecker<br>? |
| Clan 3 Crests English A.K.A. | | *<br>?<br>Tsuyaztotin | *Yiselyu<br>? | Laksilyu | Yesilyu<br>? |
| Clan 4 Crests English A.K.A. | | | Tsamashu | Laksamusyu | Llsamsahu<br>Grouse |
| Clan 5 Crests English A.K.A. | Tsa Yu<br>Beaver, Owl | Tsayu | Tsayu | Tsayu | Tsayu<br>Beaver |
| Explanations | | *No Laksilyu (but Tsuyaztotin is called Laksilyu elsewhere)<br>Lasamsayu = Grand Trunk to the North | | *Same as Bulkley but use Carrier name of Ts'oyezhotenne | |

Note: Duff (1951:28) says Tsuyaztotin is a separate phratry equated with Laksilyu rather than Jilserhyu as Jenness claims. Tsuyaztotin seems to be a recent clan, local in distribution.

Sources: Poirier (1990), Duff (1951:28-31), Jenness (1943:480, 482,483,584-586), Goldman (1941).

**Table 13 Clan Lists Reported for Burns Lake**

| Recorded By: | Poirier | Jenness for Endako |
|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1935 |
| Clan 1 | Likh ji bu | *Tam'tanyu |
| Crests | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear | (Wolverine) |
| English | | |
| A.K.A. | | |
| Clan 2 | Jilh Ts'e Yu | Yiselyu |
| Crests | Frog | Frog |
| English | | ? |
| A.K.A. | | |
| Clan 3 | Gil Lan ten | Tso'yezhotenne |
| Crests | Caribou, Mountain, Canadian Flag | Small Woodpecker |
| English | | ? |
| A.K.A. | | |
| Clan 4 | Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Llsumashyu |
| Crests | Beaver | Grouse |
| English | | |
| A.K.A. | | |
| Clan 5 | | Tsayu |
| Crests | | Beaver |
| English | | |
| A.K.A. | | |
| Explanations | | *Epidemic was said to have destroyed them in the 19th Century. |

Sources: Poirier (1990), Jenness (1943:480, 482,483,584-586).

**Table 14 Clan Lists Reported for Lake Babine**

| Recorded By: | Poirier | Kobrinsky | Steward | Jenness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1970s | 1941 | 1935 |
| Clan 1<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Lakh ji bu<br>Black Bear, Grizzly bear, Wolf | Jidumdaeniyuw<br>Grizzly Bear, Wolf | | Gitamtanyu |
| Clan 2<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Jilh Tse'e Yu<br>Frog, Martin, Thunderbird | *Jilhts'exiyuw<br>Frog | | Gilseryu |
| Clan 3<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Gil lan ten<br>Caribou, Mountain, Canadian Flag | **Laxselyuw<br>Caribou<br>Qwunbeywideyn | Laksilyu<br>?<br>*Kwanpahoten | *Laksilyu<br>Kwanpe'hwotenne |
| Clan 4<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | Likh Tsa Mis Yu<br>Beaver, Owl, Owl/Sun, Grouse, Moose, Pale Grizzly | Laxc'aemisyuw<br>Sun or Moon | **Lhtumushyu | Llsamsahu |
| Clan 5<br>Crests<br>English<br>A.K.A. | | ***Ca yuw | **Sayu | Tsayu |
| Explanations | | *Once a clan within Laxselyuw.<br>**At Bulkley, Qwunbeywiden is a clan within Laxselyuw phratry.<br>***Hold dual status. - Discrete phratry but also works as a clan of laxc'aamisyuw. | *May = Laksilyu<br>**Same clan<br>Also lists Grand Trunk and Kwanpahoten as the fourth and fifth clans, which do not correspond to the Bulkley five clans. | *Babine call Laksilyu Kwanpe'howtenne |

Sources: Poirier (1990), Kobrinsky (1973), Steward (1961:737-738), Jenness (1943:480,482,483,584-586).

**Table 15 Clan Lists Reported for Tl'azt'enne**

| Recorded By: | Poirier | Hudson | Steward | Jenness | Morice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1970s | 1941 | 1935 | 1893 |
| Clan 1 | *Loh ji boo | *,**Lacibu | | Tam'tenyu | Tam'ten-yu |
| Crests | Bear/ Wolf | Wolf | | | Grizzly Bear |
| English | | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | | *Kwunpah-wotenne |
| Clan 2 | *Lisilyoo | **Lusilyu | Lasilyu | Yasilyu | Yusil-yu |
| Crests | Frog/Grouse | Frog | Frog | | Toad |
| English | | Japan | | ? | ? |
| A.K.A. | | | Kwanpahoten | | |
| Clan 3 | Qwunbawhu-t'enne | | | *Kwanpha-t'enne | |
| Crests | Caribou | Damalas, Grouse | | ? | |
| English | | Grand Trun | | | ? |
| A.K.A. | | | | | |
| Clan 4 | Lthu'umusyoo | Tsamushu | *Lhtumulshu | Lhtsumshyu | **Lht'sumuc-yu |
| Crests | Beaver, Owl | Beaver | Owl | | Grouse |
| English | | Poliwelson | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | *Tsayu | | |
| Clan 5 | | | *Tsayu | Tsayu | Tsa-yu |
| Crests | | | | | Beaver |
| English | | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | | |
| Explanations | *Share Wall. | *New from Takla.<br>**Work Together.<br>Four Clans which operate as three. | * = Tsayu at Trembler Lake. | *Indicates a clan which disappeared.<br>Two must have joined. | *At Babine.<br>**Most powerful. |

Poirier (1990), Hudson (1983:190), Steward (1961:737-738), Jenness (1943:480,482,483,584-586), Morice (1893:203-204).

**Table 16 Clan Lists Reported for Nak'azdli**

| Recorded By: | Aasen | Poirier | Walker | Steward | Jenness | Morice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1991 | 1990 | 1974 | 1941 | 1935 | 1893 |
| Clan 1 | *Lohjiboo | Loh ji boo | | | Tam'tenyu | Tum'ten-yu |
| Crests | Bear, Wolf | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf | | | | Grizzly Bear |
| English A.K.A. | | | | | | *Kwunpah-wotenne |
| Clan 2 | Lusilyoo | Lisilyoo | Yusilyoo/ Lasilyoo | Lasilyu | Yasilyu | Yusil-yu |
| Crests | Frog | Frog, Grouse | | Frog | | Toad |
| English A.K.A. | Japan | | Japan | Kwanpahoten | ? | ? |
| Clan 3 | | Qwanba-whut'enne | Kwunba-whut'enne | | *Kwanpha-t'enne | |
| Crests | | Caribou | | | ? | |
| English A.K.A. | Grand Trunk | | Grand Trung | | | ? |
| Clan 4 | Lhtsumusyoo | Lthu'umusyoo | Lhutsumusyoo | *Lhtsumushyu | Lhsamacyu | **Lht'sumc-yu |
| Crests | Beaver, Owl | Beaver, Owl | | Owl | | Grouse |
| English A.K.A. | Poliwelson | | Poliwelson | | | |
| Clan 5 | | | | | Tsayu | Tsa-yu |
| Crests | | | | | | Beaver |
| English A.K.A. | | | | | | |
| Explanations | *New from Takla | | Three main sib groups plus one splinter group | * Most powerful<br>Two phratries at Fort St. James - Third at the western end of Stewart Lake | *Fifth clan - two must have joined. | *At Babine<br>**Most powerful |

Stuart Lake Tumtenyu changes at Babine to Kwunpa-hwo'tenne (Morice 1893:201)

Sources: Poirier (1990), Hudson (1983:190), Walker (1974:385), Steward (1961:737-738), Jenness (1943:480,482,483,584-586), Morice (1893:203-204).

**Table 17 Clan Lists Reported for Stoney Creek**

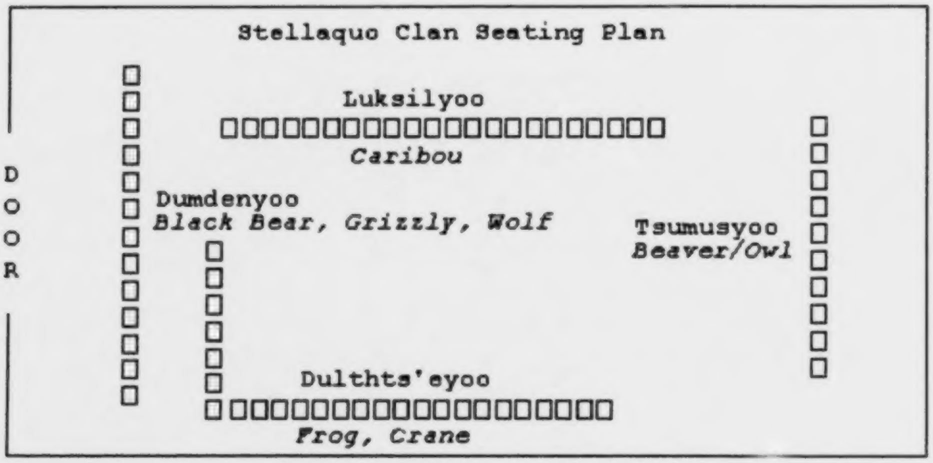
| Recorded By: | Poirier | Duff | Steward | Goldman | Jenness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation Date: | 1990 | 1951 | 1941 | 1940 | 1935 |
| Clan 1 | | | | | |
| Crests | | | | | |
| English | | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | | |
| Clan 2 | Dulkw'ah/ Tsasdli | Jilseryu | | Gilserhyu | Yesilyu/Laksilyu |
| Crests | Frog | | | | Frog, Crane |
| English | | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | Nulki | | | Nulki |
| Clan 3 | | Laksilyu | Laksilyu | Yusilyu | Gilseryu |
| Crests | Cariboo | | | | Small Owl |
| English | Grand Trunk | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | Tachick | Nalhkwiten | | Tachik L. |
| Clan 4 | | | Lhtsumulshu | | |
| Crests | | | | | |
| English | | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | Ta'chekten | | |
| Clan 5 | | | | | |
| Crests | | | | | |
| English | | | | | |
| A.K.A. | | | | | |
| Explanations | | A few Tsayu, Tamtanyu, Lsamasyu aligned with other phratries. | | | |

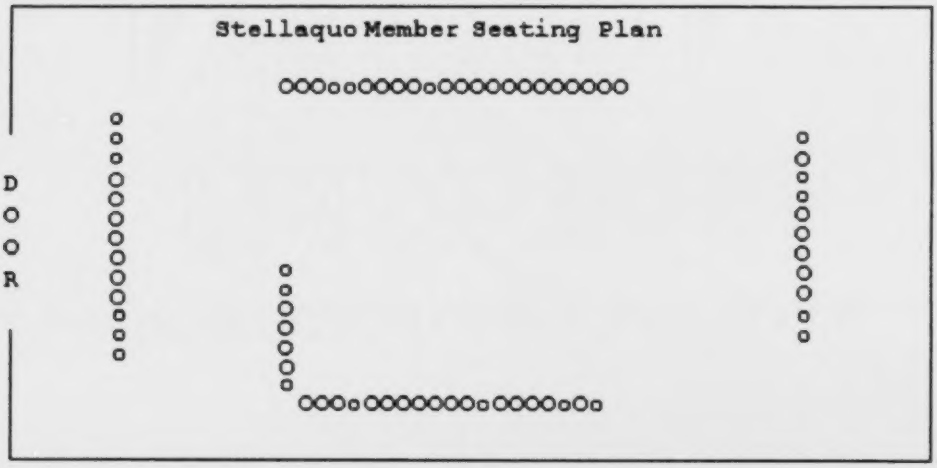
Sources: Poirier (1990), Steward (1961:737-738), Duff (1951:28-31), Goldman (1941).

## APPENDIX 2 Potlatch Seating Plan for Some Carrier Subtribes

**Figure 8 Stellaquo Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Luksilyoo | Caribou |
| Tsumusyoo | Beaver |
| Dulthts'ehyoo | Frog, Crane |
| *Dumdenyoo | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf |


Stellaquo Clan Seating Plan
Luksilyoo
Caribou
D O O R
Dumdenyoo
Black Bear, Grizzly, Wolf
Tsumusyoo
Beaver/Owl
Dulthts'eyoo
Frog, Crane

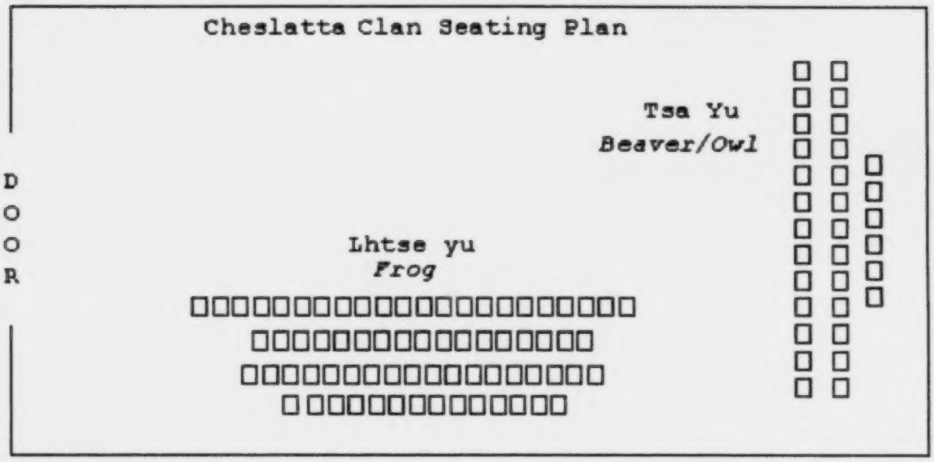

Stellaquo Member Seating Plan
D O O R

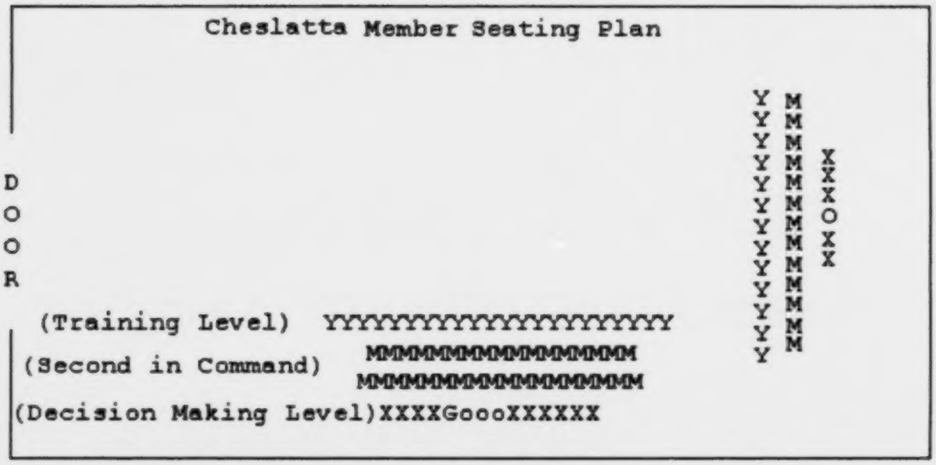
M = Active Member
o = Vacant Named Seat
Y = Youth Member
X = Elder
O = Name Holder
E = Empty Seat
G = Government Chief

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 9 Cheslatta Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Tsa Yu | Beaver, Owl |
| Lhtse yu | Frog |


Cheslatta Clan Seating Plan
Tsa Yu
Beaver/Owl
DOOR
Lhtse yu
Frog

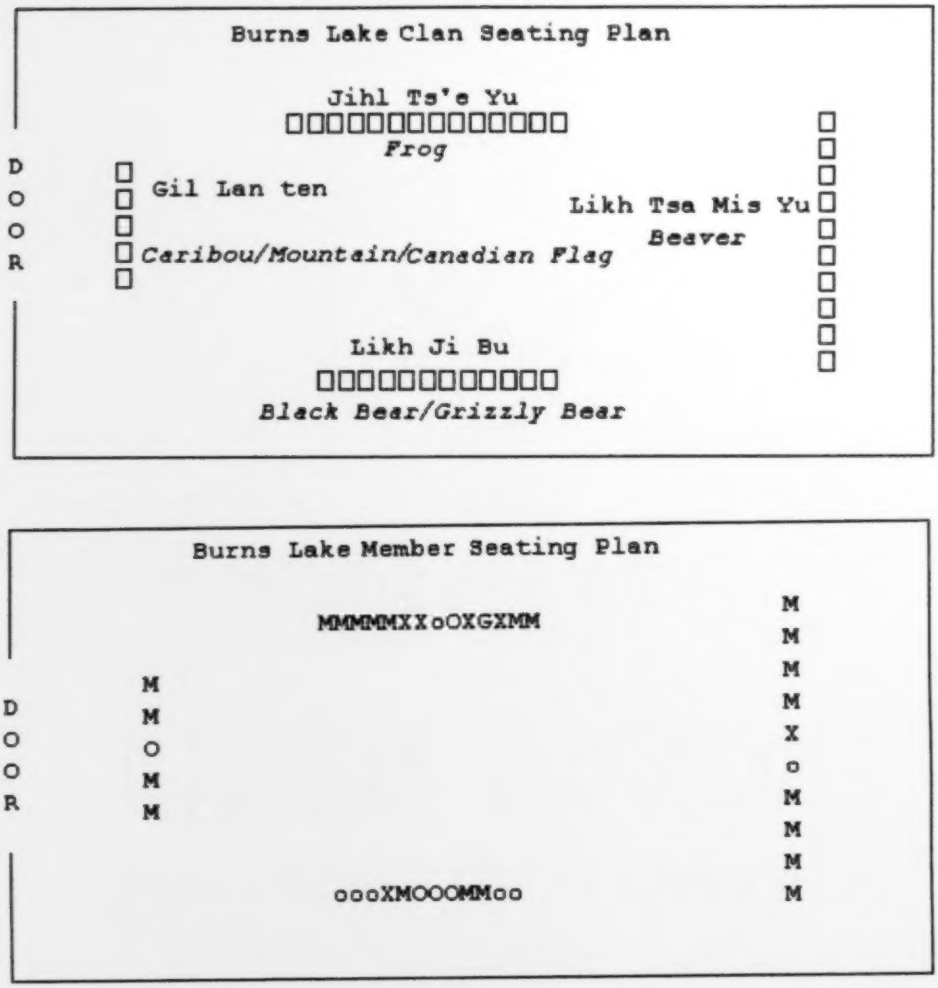

Cheslatta Member Seating Plan
DOOR
(Training Level) YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY
(Second in Command) MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM
MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM
(Decision Making Level)XXXXGoooXXXXXX
XXXOXX

M = Active Member
o = Vacant Named Seat
Y = Youth Member
X = Elder
O = Name Holder
E = Empty Seat
G = Government Chief

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 10 Burns Lake Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Lick Ji Bu | Black Bear |
| Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Beaver |
| Jilh Ts'e Yu | Frog |
| Gil Lanten | Caribou, Mountain, Canadian Flag |

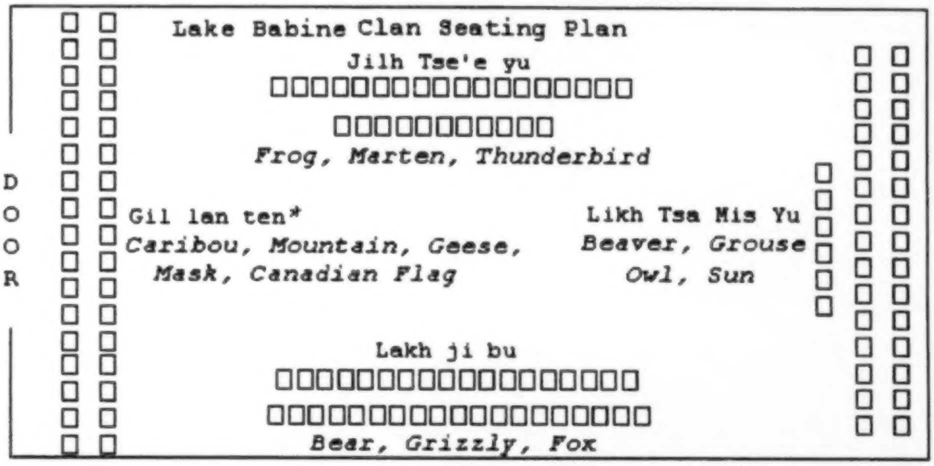

Burns Lake Clan Seating Plan
Jihl Ts'e Yu
*Frog*
DOOR
Gil Lan ten
*Caribou/Mountain/Canadian Flag*
Likh Tsa Mis Yu
*Beaver*
Likh Ji Bu
*Black Bear/Grizzly Bear*
Burns Lake Member Seating Plan
MMMMMXXoOXGXMM
DOOR
M M O M M
M M M M X o M M M M
oooXMOOOMMoo

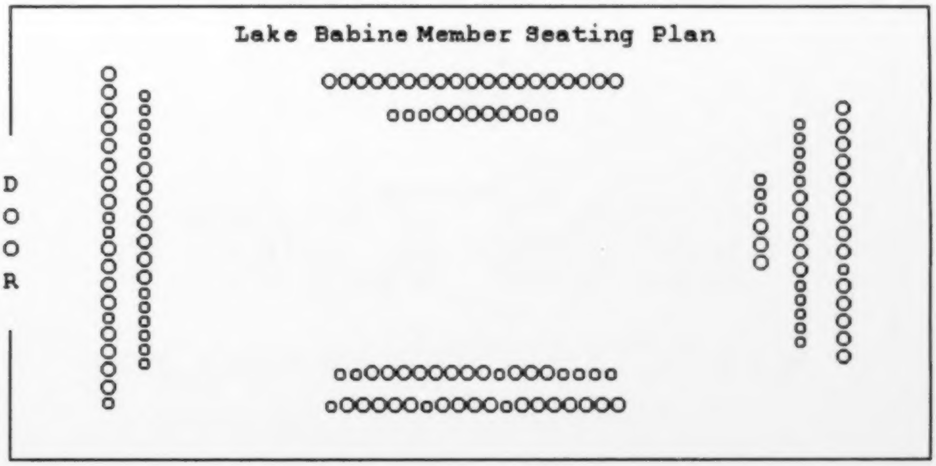
M = Active Member X = Elder E = Empty Seat
o = Vacant Named Seat O = Name Holder G = Government Chief
Y = Youth Member

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 11 Lake Babine Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Beaver, Owl, Owl/Sun, Grouse, Moose, Pale Grizzly |
| Lakh ji bu | Black Bear, Grizzly, Fox, Timberwolf, Crow, Flower |
| Gil lan ten | Mountain/Canadian Flag, Caribou |
| Jilh Tse'e yu | Frog, Marten, Thunderbird, Beads, Ribbon |


Lake Babine Clan Seating Plan
Jilh Tse'e yu
Frog, Marten, Thunderbird
DOOR
Gil lan ten*
Caribou, Mountain, Geese,
Mask, Canadian Flag
Likh Tsa Mis Yu
Beaver, Grouse
Owl, Sun
Lakh ji bu
Bear, Grizzly, Fox


Lake Babine Member Seating Plan
DOOR

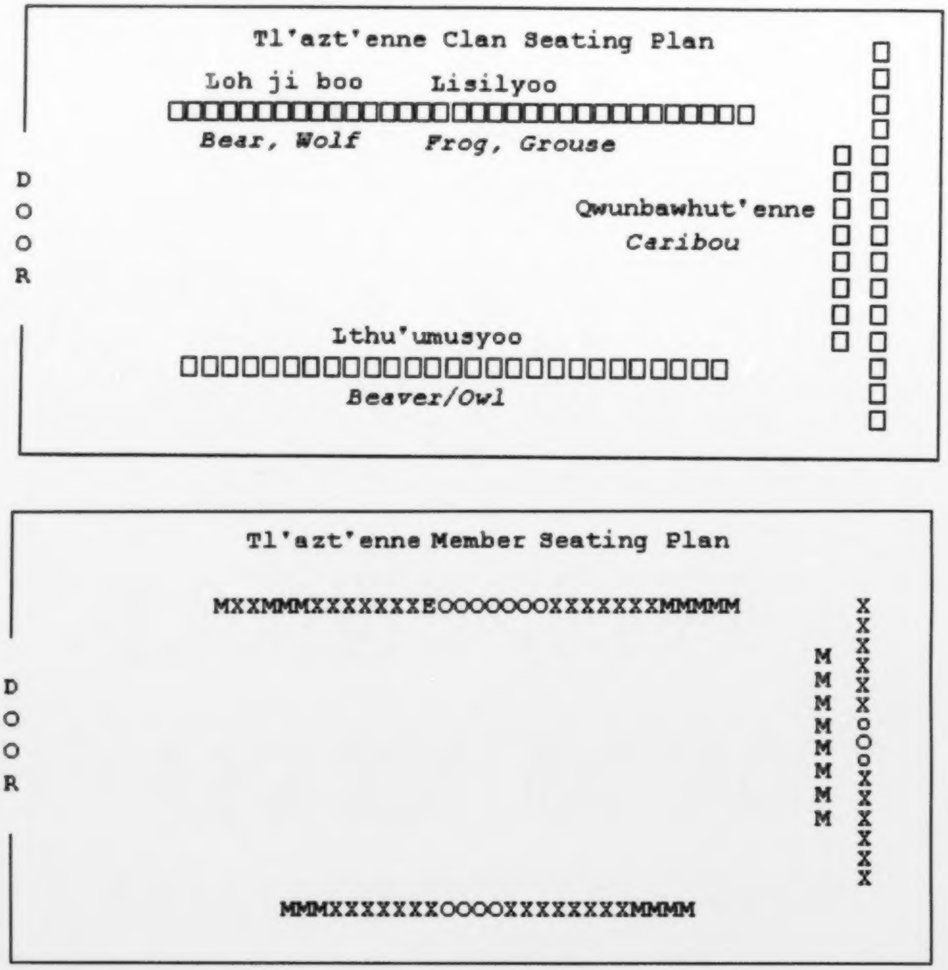
M = Active Member  X = Elder  E = Empty Seat
o = Vacant Named Seat  O = Name Holder  G = Government Chief
Y = Youth Member

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 12 Tl'azt'enne Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| +Lisilyoo | Frog, Grouse |
| +Loh ji boo | Bear, Wolf |
| Lthu'umusyoo | Beaver, Owl |
| Qwunbawhut'enne | Caribou |

+Sit Together

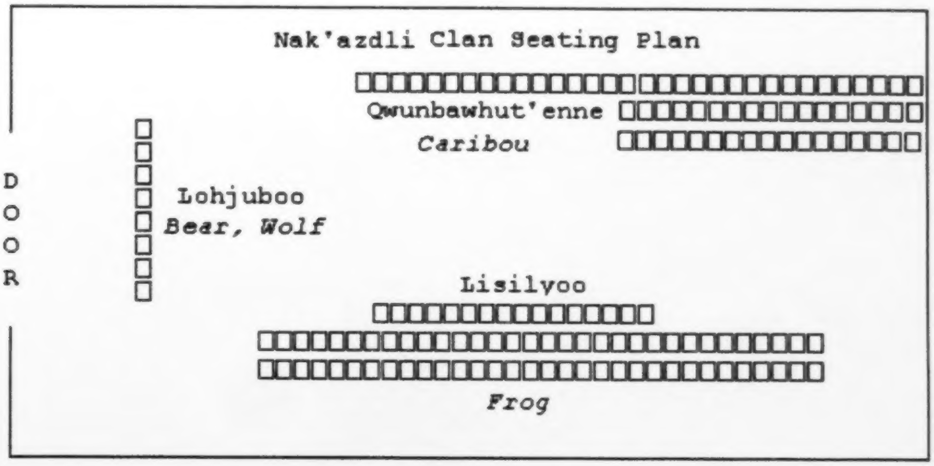

Tl'azt'enne Clan Seating Plan
Loh ji boo
Lisilyoo
Bear, Wolf
Frog, Grouse
DOOR
Qwunbawhut'enne
Caribou
Lthu'umusyoo
Beaver/Owl
Tl'azt'enne Member Seating Plan
MXXMMMXXXXXXXEOOOOOOOXXXXXXXMMMMM
DOOR
MMMMMMMM
XXXXXXoOoXXXXXX
MMMXXXXXXXXOOOOXXXXXXXXMMMM

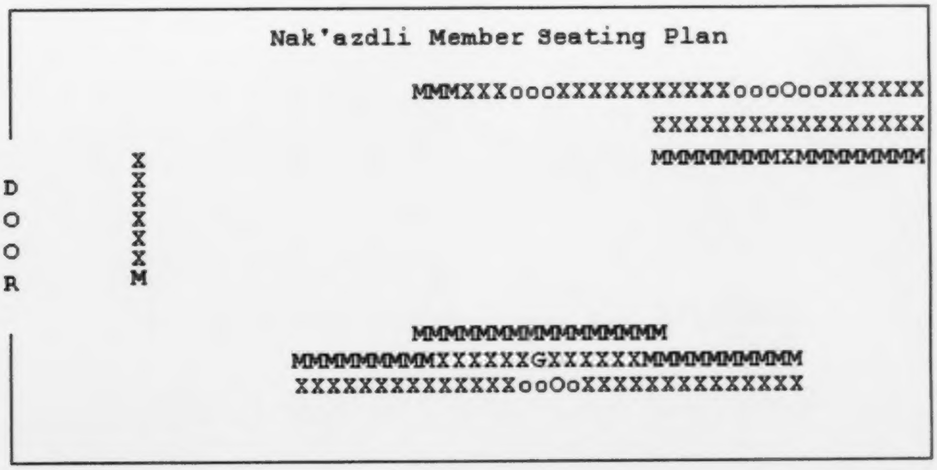
M = Active Member
X = Elder
E = Empty Seat
o = Vacant Named Seat
O = Name Holder
G = Government Chief
Y = Youth Member

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 13 Nak'azdli Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Lisilyoo | Frog, Grouse |
| Lohjuboo | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf |
| Lhtu'umusyoo | Beaver, Owl |
| Qwunbawhut'enne | Caribou |


Nak'azdli Clan Seating Plan
Qwunbawhut'enne
*Caribou*
D
O
O
R
Lohjuboo
*Bear, Wolf*
Lisilyoo
*Frog*

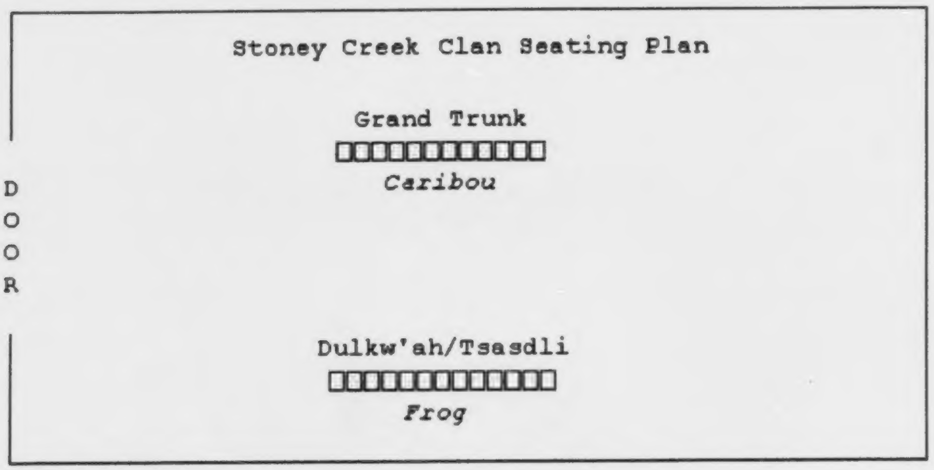

Nak'azdli Member Seating Plan
MMMXXXoooXXXXXXXXXXXoooOooXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
MMMMMMMMXMMMMMMMM
D
O
O
R
XXXXXXM
MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM
MMMMMMMMMXXXXXXGXXXXXXMMMMMMMMMM
XXXXXXXXXXXXXooOoXXXXXXXXXXXXX

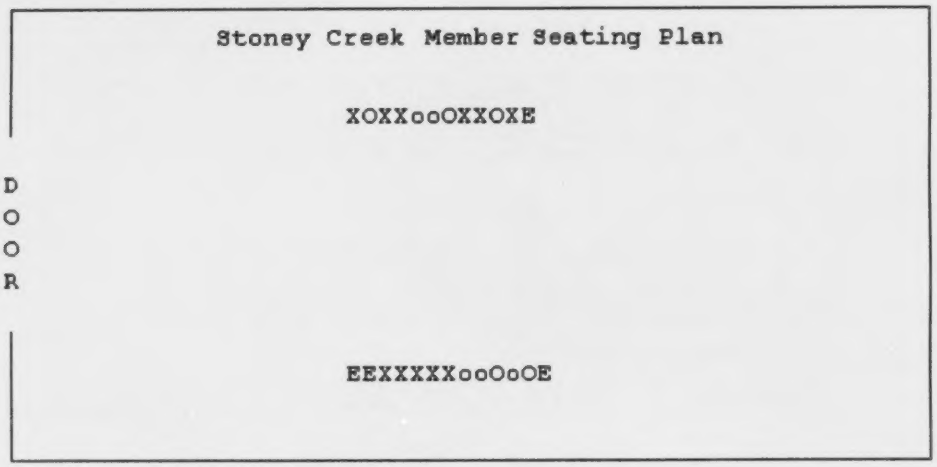
M = Active Member
X = Elder
E = Empty Seat
o = Vacant Named Seat
O = Name Holder
G = Government Chief
Y = Youth Member

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 14 Stoney Creek Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Dulkw'ah/Tsasdli | Frog |
| Grandtrunk | Caribou |


Stoney Creek Clan Seating Plan
Grand Trunk
Caribou
DOOR
Dulkw'ah/Tsasdli
Frog

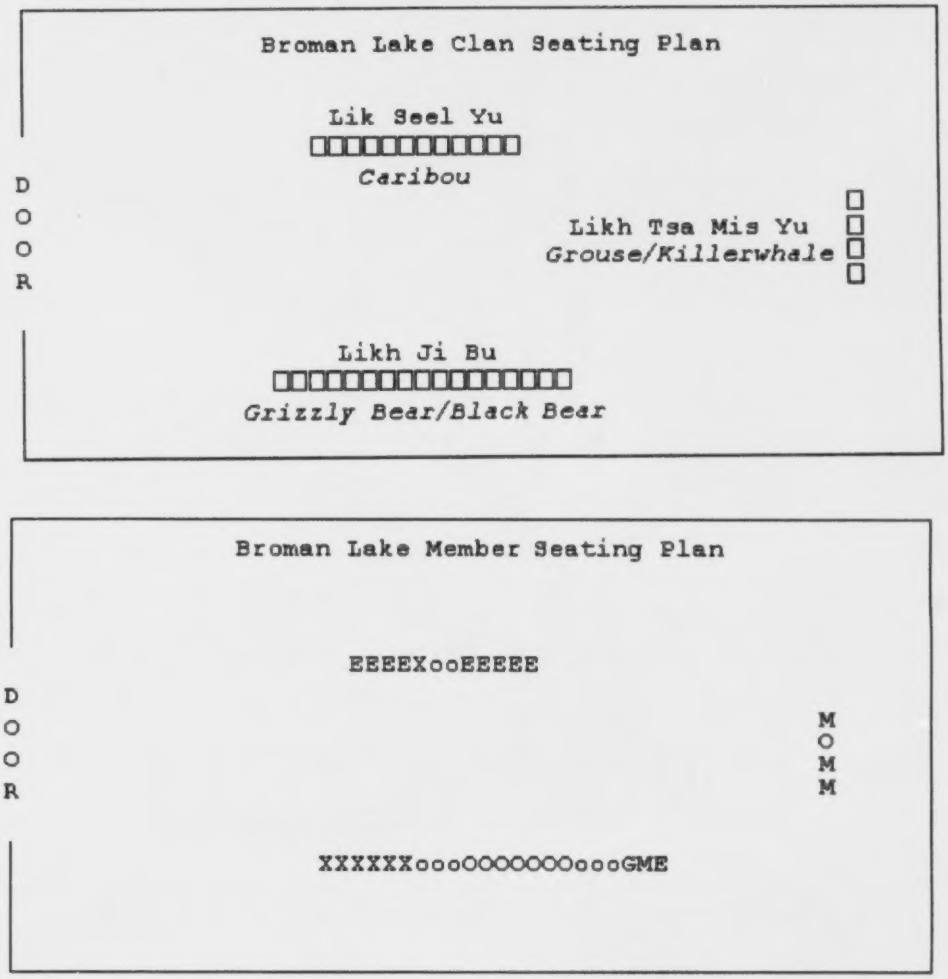

Stoney Creek Member Seating Plan
XOXXooOXXOXE
DOOR
EEXXXXXooOoOE

M = Active Member
o = Vacant Named Seat
Y = Youth Member
X = Elder
O = Name Holder
E = Empty Seat
G = Government Chief

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 15 Broman Lake Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Likh Ji Bu | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Wolf |
| Lik Seel Yu | Caribou |
| Likh Tsa Mis Yu | Grouse, Killerwhale |

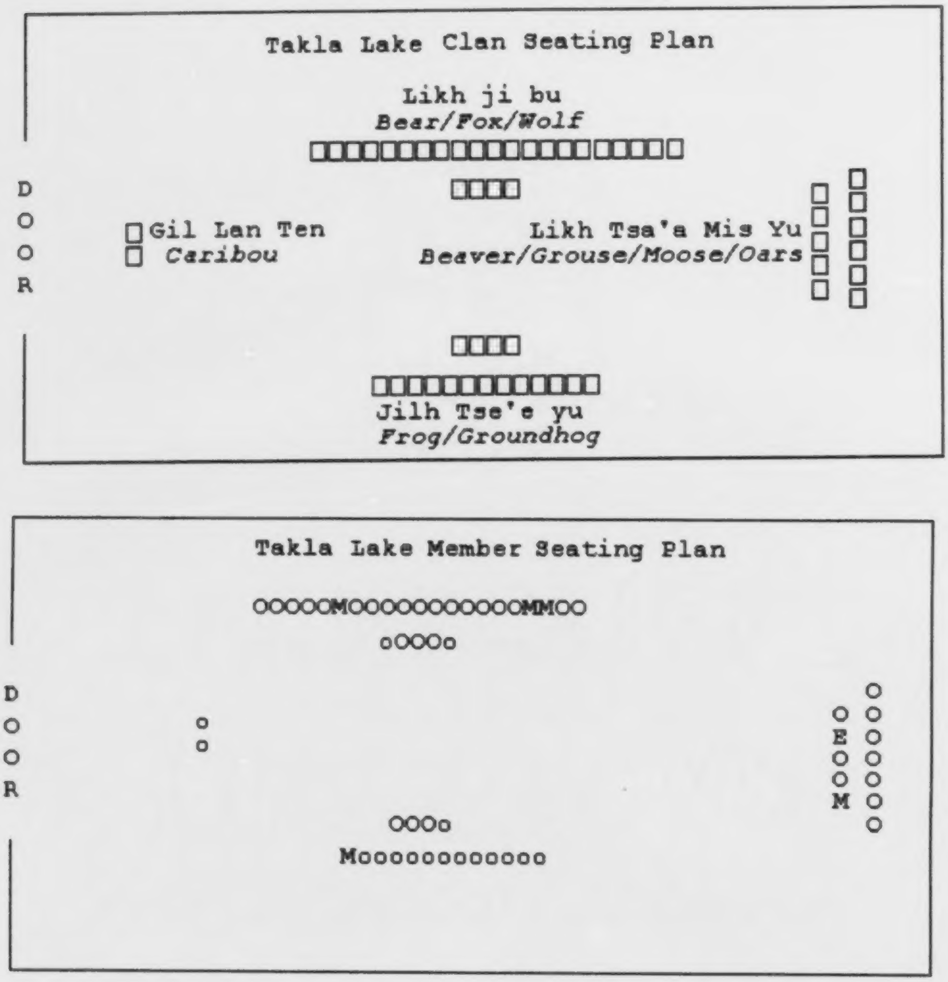

Broman Lake Clan Seating Plan
Lik Seel Yu
Caribou
DOOR
Likh Tsa Mis Yu
Grouse/Killerwhale
Likh Ji Bu
Grizzly Bear/Black Bear
Broman Lake Member Seating Plan
EEEEXooEEEEE
DOOR
MOMM
XXXXXXoooOOOOOOOoooGME

M = Active Member X = Elder E = Empty Seat
o = Vacant Named Seat O = Name Holder G = Government Chief
Y = Youth Member

Adapted from Poirier (1990).

**Figure 16 Takla Lake Potlatch Seating Plan**

| Clans | Crests |
|---|---|
| Likh Tsa'a Mis Yu | Beaver, Grouse, Moose, Oars |
| Gil Lan Ten | Caribou |
| Jilh Tse'e yu | Frog, Groundhog |
| Likh ji bu | Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Fox, Wolf |


Takla Lake Clan Seating Plan
Likh ji bu
Bear/Fox/Wolf
DOOR
Gil Lan Ten
Caribou
Likh Tsa'a Mis Yu
Beaver/Grouse/Moose/Oars
Jilh Tse'e yu
Frog/Groundhog
Takla Lake Member Seating Plan
OOOOOMOOOOOOOOOOOOMMOO
oOOOo
DOOR
o
o
O
E
O
O
M
OOOOOOO
OOOo
Mooooooooooooo

M = Active Member
o = Vacant Named Seat
Y = Youth Member
X = Elder
O = Name Holder
E = Empty Seat
G = Government Chief

Adapted from Poirier (1990).